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T. W. Hewley.  
from E. C. Hewley.  
Christmas 1900

LETTERS

OF

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN

*SOME PRESS NOTICES OF THE  
FIRST EDITION*

“These volumes are not only fascinating: they confirm a fame which, although never wide, was always unquestioned within its range.”—MR. A. T. QUILLER-COUCH in *The Monthly Review*.

“A delightful hearty book of letters, by a scholar, a humourist, a man full of noble qualities. The book is a book to be read.”—MR. ANDREW LANG in the *Daily News*.

“Worthy of a place on the same shelves that hold the letters of Horace Walpole and Cowper, Lamb and Gray, and Edward FitzGerald.”

*Literature.*

LETTERS  
OF  
THOMAS EDWARD BROWN

AUTHOR OF 'FO'C'SLE YARNS'

EDITED  
*WITH AN INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR*

BY  
SIDNEY T. IRWIN

VOL. I

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TO  
HIS SISTER  
AND HIS CHILDREN  
THESE VOLUMES  
ARE  
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED  
BY HIS FRIEND  
AND THEIRS

769453





## PREFATORY NOTE

I DESIRE to thank those who have sent me letters or helped me in other ways, and at the same time to apologize to them for the publication of the letters being so long delayed.

Those who knew the writer will easily understand me when I say that they were too private for an intelligent copyist, and too difficult to be left to an unintelligent one. Nor is the leisure required for copying easily found by a school-master. Some valuable letters, moreover, were only recently sent me. I have also been compelled to cut down the material at my disposal, it being thought desirable that the book should not be large. These excuses are real though they do not claim to be adequate.

My special thanks are due to Mr. Mozley and Mr. Dakyns for most helpful suggestions and unsparing labour. Mr. Mozley, indeed, has all along done that for a new friend which the oldest friendships could not ask.

CLIFTON COLLEGE, BRISTOL,  
*July, 1900.*

. . . Χάριτος Ἀττικῆς μεστὰς ἀποφαίνων τὰς συνουσίας, ὥς  
τοὺς προσομιλήσαντας ἀπιέναι . . . παντοίους ὑπ' εὐφροσύνης  
γενομένους καὶ κοσμιωτέρους παρὰ πολὺ καὶ φαιδροτέρους  
καὶ πρὸς τὸ μέλλον εὐέλπιδας.—LUCIAN.

Large was his soul; as large a soul as e'er  
Submitted to inform a body here.  
High as the place 'twas shortly in Heav'n to have,  
But low and humble as his grave.  
So high, that all the virtues there did come,  
As to the chiefest seat  
Conspicuous and great;  
So low that for me too it made a room.—COWLEY.

Speravi . . . . .  
Credulus heu longos, ut quondam, fallere soles :  
. . . . .  
At tu, sancta anima et nostri non indiga luctus,  
. . . quod possum, iuxta lugere sepulchrum  
Dum iuvat, et mutae vana haec iactare favillae.—GRAY.

## INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR

THESE volumes need no apology. 'Request of friends' is indeed the occasion of their being published, but not the justification. Everything in literature that can be called *sui generis* deserves to see the light; and of the most characteristic of these letters it may at least be said that they do not resemble any others to be found in literature. This does not of necessity imply an attempt to place the writer in the highest class of letter-writers, or indeed to place him at all. Comparative estimates in this kind are seldom satisfactory. It is enough to claim for these letters, what cannot be claimed for the letters of every man of genius, that their individuality and variety are a perpetual surprise—were a perpetual surprise even to those who knew the writer best. As one of his friends put it, 'You never come to the end of Brown.'

There has been much talk of late about the art of letter-writing. Mr. John Morley, I think, produced a class-list of the masters of the craft; and a brilliant article in the *Nineteenth Century* of July, 1898, discussed with delightful copiousness their

different fascinations. An examination of the styles there passed in review would support what I have said of the novelty of this contribution to epistolary literature. Gray, Cowper, Byron, Lamb, Fitzgerald, not one of these has a manner of which Brown's could be called a reproduction, or to which his manner could really be compared. If there is in it something of the allusiveness of Lamb, it is still not Lamb's allusiveness but his own. Cowper and Fitzgerald—separated as they are by something like a century—have that in common which is emphatically *not* a characteristic of these letters. Cowper wrote, he said, 'nothing above the pitch of everyday scribble': and no admirer of Brown could contend that his slightest fragment could be so described; while the 'carelessness' which so charms us in Fitzgerald is no less absent. Brown knew he was not careless. 'I like,' he said, 'to please my friends.' But in Pope's phrase, 'There's a happiness as well as care'; and the best things in these letters, like the best things in the writer's conversation, came with a rush of spontaneity, and were lavished indifferently on the simple and the cultivated.

This introduction is not intended to anticipate the reader's judgment on the letters. That the man who wrote them was rarely gifted is a fact sufficiently obvious to the small public who know his poems; and the conviction that a similar verdict would be passed upon his letters has made his friends desire their publication.

Brown acquired his manner early, and it is noticeable even in his undergraduate letters. A week or so



before his death he spoke to me of some of them with satisfaction, having read them over again at his sister's house, after the lapse of nearly half a century. He contrasted them, I remember, with others only a little earlier, which seemed to him hopelessly crude. In the earliest letters I have been shown there is nothing to call for so harsh a judgment, but they are wholly unlike those with which all his friends are familiar; and while the religious sentiment in them is unquestionably sincere, it employs a language more conventional than can be anywhere discovered in his later manner. On the other hand, it should be said that the letters to which I am referring were written by a youth—at most by a very young man—to a revered senior to whom he was under great obligations. I am justified in using the phrase 'wholly unlike his later manner,' but there is in them at times a startling precocity of phrase that prepares us for that penetrating vigour which is perhaps the most obvious characteristic of the letters taken as a whole.

Moreover, these earliest letters show a force of character and a determination remarkable in a boy of eighteen, a fixed resolve to do the best for himself and for his mind. They show, too, something which was true of him all through his life—that he would carry out no resolve, however cherished, at the expense of gratitude, or courtesy, or consideration for others. I have drawn freely on them for the purposes of this memoir, though I have not inserted them among the other letters, for the man is there unquestionably, even if the letter-writer is less recognizable.

It is much hoped that the friend to whom is inscribed the 'Epistle,' which some at least would rank first among Brown's poems, may be induced to give the world an adequate biography. For the purpose of this work a mere outline of his life, enough to serve as commentary to the letters, is all that is required.

Even to the biographer proper his life will be found curiously devoid of incident. It was by deliberate choice the *vita fallens*. Reading and writing poetry, seeing or writing to his friends, taking long solitary walks, were to him satisfying pursuits; for common ambitions he had no use.

In distinguished company he was not unfrequently silent, and never claimed position or recognition for himself. 'Recognition,' says a lady who knew him well, 'he never seemed to expect.' Yet he was quite alive to his own powers (as may be seen in more than one notable passage in the letters), though content, like Goldsmith, to draw his bills on posterity. Once when I remarked on the omission of his name in an article on 'Minor Poets' in one of the magazines, he said with a smile, 'Perhaps I am among the major!'

The friend who spoke of his indifference to recognition also dwelt on the singular combination in him of extreme modesty with a certain proud reserve. There were, in truth, two selves in him—one which mixed with his fellows on terms of perfect equality, and another which inhabited a land of dreams: he was never tired of insisting on the value of dreams. Yet his dreams were not dreamy but rather open visions, great—perhaps his greatest—realities. And

here too he conversed on terms of equality with somebody or something; one may surmise with the Muses. 'I never am, and never can be alone,' is a phrase in one of the letters. An old pupil, who had been much with him, once said to me when I thought I was beginning to know him well, 'You must not think you know all about Brown because you see so much of him. However intimate he may be with his friends, there is quite another Brown who takes long solitary walks on the Downs.'

I have been often reminded, when I reflected on the scant public recognition his rare gifts had received, of a story in Valerius Maximus. I fancied he must often in those dreams of his have heard Apollo saying to him what the disappointed musician said to his favourite pupil when the theatre refused to applaud—*cane mihi et musis!*

A life so full of interest, and so barren of incident, is not an easy one to record; but it is one of the blessings conferred by great letter-writers that they tell the most difficult part of their story—the part which needs no external stimulus to heighten its interest—with a fullness impossible to the biographer. Still any biographical comment is some help, and I will put down here what I have been able to gather about Brown's early days and the home from which he came.

Thomas Edward Brown was born in the Isle of Man on May 5, 1830. He was the sixth of ten children. His father, the Rev. Robert Brown, was then living in Douglas, and was Incumbent of St. Matthew's Church. Brown's last verses, written some two months before

his death (a new<sup>1</sup> church was to be erected on the site of the old one), showed how deeply he was thrilled by the associations of that early time, though too remote for reminiscence: for he was only two years old when his father was made Vicar of Kirk Braddan, near Douglas.

The verses on 'Kirk Braddan Vicarage,' as well as the poem called 'Old John,' crowded as they are with reminiscence, illustrate with a more searching force and a greater fullness what associations meant to him. Life 'rooted in the past' was a favourite theme, and what he would have called a back-seeking note was never absent from thought and speech. He was often saddened with the haunting consciousness of how little would survive him of that past to which he clung so tenderly.

The Vicarage was a low white house, with an upper floor that sloped as in old inns. The garden was in squares of fruit and vegetables, and bordered by flower-beds. The flowers were chiefly moss and cabbage roses, narcissus and wallflowers. It is not unimportant to mention these things, as flowers had an extraordinary fascination for him, and his letters are full of them—of his delight in his first crocuses, of the melancholy suggested by snowdrops, of the delicate bog-bean in the marshes, and the hopeful honeysuckle so early in leaf. I remember bringing him yellow flags (wild iris) at Clifton, and his telling me at once of the one place in his island where he had found them. He thought too he could remember when the fuchsia, now so abundant there, was com-

<sup>1</sup> There was a bazaar in aid of the fund raised for a new St. Matthew's; and T. E. B. was asked to contribute verses.

paratively rare in gardens. Again, when I was staying at Clevedon in 1897, he told me to notice how the smell of the sea mingled with the smell of the wall-flower on the walls above it.

To the east the view from Braddan Vicarage included a strip of sea. The house looked south-east, and that view was bounded by Douglas Head. There were fields beyond the garden—the scene of the potato-picking and hay-carrying described in ‘Old John’—and the house was sheltered by trees, ash and sycamore.

No phrases of a meagre memoir can tell how Brown’s boyhood nourished itself in the uneventful life at the Vicarage, but it can be guessed from the two poems I have mentioned, and from the letters.

‘Old John,’ the old Scotch man-servant, was, I have been told, a rather crabbed specimen of humanity; but it is clear that the strength of his character and affections were of a kind to make a deep impression on an imaginative temper, and to such a temper his companionship would be both enlarging and enlightening.

Brown was fifteen<sup>1</sup> before he went to King William’s College. Till that age he was taught arithmetic and book-keeping by the parish schoolmaster, and English and the elements of Latin by his father.

The vicar’s eyesight was weak, and he made his boys read to him, sometimes four hours at a stretch. The historical English classics were read over and over. In one of the letters speaking of the value of the Waverley Novels, and how they supplied the

<sup>1</sup> He was not seventeen when his father died—very suddenly.



historical impulse, Brown mentions that he and one of his brothers lined their bedroom with a series of historical portraits. With these readings and the company of the Waverleys there would seem to have been no lack of education in the most real sense during this early period.

The Vicar of Braddan was no ordinary man. Of this his published sermons, some of which I have read, are sufficient evidence. His son loved to tell of an occasion when he noticed a distinguished stranger in the congregation arrested and surprised into earnest attention by a preacher so uncommon.

He was so fastidious about composition that he would make his son read some fragment of an English classic to him before answering an invitation! There were those who could not understand how a man so conspicuous for Evangelical piety could attach so much importance to a question of style and manner. But his son was not one of them. 'To my father,' he said, 'style was like the instinct of personal cleanliness.'

He wrote verse as well as prose; and the family were proud to remember that one of his published poems had brought him an appreciative letter from Wordsworth. Though Brown did not rate very high his father's poetical powers, he was much moved by his verses; and once sent me a hymn of his father's, for which, from its associations, the bygone manner being one of them, he had a feeling that could not be described as mere filial tenderness. He described his father's manner as stern and undemonstrative; if he liked his son's reading, or approved of verses which he had set him to write, I think the eulogistic phrase

was, 'That will do, sir'; or surprising him at the piano and evidently pleased, he would merely say, 'Go on, sir.' But it seems he had much potential emotion, and this appeared from time to time, though characteristically enough in the pulpit and not in the Vicarage. It is recorded of 'Old John' that he liked his master's sermons best 'when he was crying'! When Brown spoke of himself as 'a born sobber,' perhaps he was conscious of deriving some small part of his emotional inheritance even from this severely reticent and self-contained father.

Mr. Brown was never at a University, and his scholarly habit of mind was therefore a very striking proof of originality—such habits being rarely formed without more encouragement.

I may seem to have written of Brown's father at disproportionate length for so slight a memoir. There is, however, one very interesting letter which may be the clearer for this commentary; and to me, at least, there was in all that Brown told of his father (and he spoke to me constantly of him) that which shed an uncommon light on his own pieties and sympathies.

Brown's mother was of Scotch extraction, though born in the Island: and her son would often say how much of the latent Scotchman in him rushed to the surface when he was in Scotland, or taking part in some Burns commemoration.

Mrs. Brown<sup>1</sup> was a diligent reader all her life, and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 118. His brother Hugh, there spoken of as 'his mother's own child,' was the eminent Baptist clergyman, Minister of Myrtle Street Chapel, Liverpool. T. E. B. always spoke not only of his brother being far better known than himself, but as though he deserved to be.

a great reader of poetry. Besides literary feeling, she had a keen wit—a more daring and masculine wit, her son has told me, than is common in women—and strong practical common sense. Of her son's affection for her, of his consciousness of all he owed to her and had inherited from her, of his self-denying efforts to help her, there is testimony of every kind.

As he became older, I at least noticed a growing likeness to her portrait.

Brown was shy and timid, his sister says, as a boy, with a shyness that never quite left him; but he none the less lived *by choice* in the very centre of the family, and could do his lessons, sitting with them and joining in the talk.

It would seem that the beginnings of his life, like his life as a whole, never needed the stimulus of events. Mind and character, imagination and observation, fostered as they were by his mother's force and brightness and his father's high standards in study and in taste, grew and throve on a smaller experience, on fewer aids to reflection, than would suffice for natures less happily constituted and conditioned.

Of Brown's school-days I have some reminiscences from three of his oldest friends—from Archdeacon Gill, Rector of Kirk Andreas in the Isle of Man, from the Archdeacon of Manchester, the Rev. J. M. Wilson, and from the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, Dr. Fowler, President of Corpus. Archdeacon Gill was his 'class-fellow and close friend during the whole of his time at King William's College' (1846-1849). He recalls how Brown's 'easy translations from the classics excited the admiration of the Form, and how

our head master, Dr. Dixon, with whom he was a special favourite, praised them.' He distinguished himself too in verse composition, Greek, Latin, and *English*; the last—'a regular week-day exercise with us in those days—gave promise of the remarkable poetic power which he afterwards developed.' Archdeacon Gill wishes, as all Brown's friends must wish, that these early efforts had been preserved.

At school, apparently, 'he would not attempt to study mathematics, for which he had a decided distaste,' but at Oxford he laboured at them painfully, and in a letter to Archdeacon Moore<sup>1</sup> he not only speaks of mathematics 'taking up much of his time in the vacation and puzzling him unmercifully,' but also refers in most grateful terms to the mathematical Tutor of Christ Church<sup>2</sup>, 'the kindest and most diligent of men,' who was then leaving Oxford for the living of Sheering in Essex. 'His kindness to me was very great, and the patience with which he sat down to the investigation of my somewhat puerile difficulties, admirable. I could not have experienced a greater loss. There was a kind of emulation between us; he worked, and I worked, and his example had greater influence with me than his precepts. He likes a steady workman in preference, I fancy, to a man of very brilliant parts, so that I suited him pretty well.'

I have thought it worth while to insert this reference to college days, as showing that the consciousness of easy power which came to him at school was not enough for him when largely by his own force of will he had secured an entrance into the University,

<sup>1</sup> July 16, 1850.

<sup>2</sup> The late Canon Hill.

and had resolved it should yield to him all it had to give. So strong was this resolve that in the same letter he confesses to over-working, 'reading sometimes twelve hours a day and even more, and rising from his labour with his brain almost on fire.'

Archdeacon Gill speaks of him as 'emphatically a manly, vigorous boy,' but 'being a day-boy he was seldom at school during the hours of play, and I do not remember ever to have seen him taking part in any school game.'

These reminiscences conclude with a sentence on which perhaps the only comment needed is that suggested by the writer, that only Brown's friends knew Brown, and not all of them. 'He had then, as throughout his life, a strong sense of humour, with a keen eye for any little peculiarity of voice, or accent, or manner, and it is to be feared that his rather indiscreet use of his great power of mimicry sometimes gave offence to those who did not know (as his more intimate friends did) how incapable his kindly, gentle soul was of willingly hurting any one's feelings.'

Dr. Fowler, who was Brown's junior by a year and a half, mentions that among his school-fellows were Dean Farrar and Professor Beesly. He himself, he says, did not become acquainted with Brown till August, 1848 (he entered the school in January), when he was promoted into the head Form. 'As soon,' he goes on, 'as we began to have our lessons together, we seemed drawn to each other by some natural affinity. We were both day-boys, and, as our roads lay in the same direction, frequently walked home or to school together. Our intimacy matured,



and these casual walks were soon developed into afternoon walks on half-holidays. On these occasions, our conversation was not about athletics, as it might have been in these days, but about literature, history, politics, theology, and, perhaps above all, about the beautiful scenery amidst which we rambled. To those who know the southern portion of the Isle of Man, the attraction of this last topic will not seem strange when I mention the rocks at Scarlet, South Barrule, Langness Point, Derby Haven, Balla Salla, Kirk Malew, Kirk Santon, &c. Brown was already an enthusiast about the scenery of his native island, and it was not long after our acquaintance began before I detected the touch of genius which was characteristic of him throughout life.'

Archdeacon Wilson was too much Brown's junior to know him at school, but his reminiscences seem almost the more vivid for that fact.

'I can well remember,' he says, 'as a small boy of eleven just placed in the fifth class at King William's College, having Brown pointed out to me, not without awe. He was said "to know more than any master"! and "to have written the best Latin prose that the University examiners had ever seen"! F. W. Farrar had just left the school, and was remembered. T. Fowler was there still; and other giants, whom we looked at with reverence. But Brown we thought was more than they. Wherever he was, there was life at its fullest. Of course he never saw or spoke to a youngster like me.

'He lived somewhere on "The Green," and walked up, about half a mile, to school. It was only then that

I saw him, coming to school or leaving it, with his friends. But I remember the shouts of joyous laughter; the pause in the walk; the head thrown back; the grave listening, lips tightly closed; the explosion into words, and the talk endless, varied, brilliant.'

'This was from August, 1848, to March, 1849, during which months his school-days and mine overlapped. If I had never seen him again, he would live as a distinct figure in my memory.

'Five years afterwards he was there at a prize-day, when my twin-brother and I carried off a good many prizes. The great Oxford scholar spoke to the promising schoolboy, and a life-long friendship began.

'His memory was always fresh in the College. A year or two later, but before he came back as a master, I was present at a prize-day, and proposed cheers for some distinguished old members of the school. Major Anderson was present, who so gallantly defended Lucknow, and Captain Griffiths, my own contemporary, another hero of the Mutiny. But I let myself go about Brown also; and the school showed that they had not forgotten him, and that he was among their demigods.'

I may mention that Mrs. Williamson, Brown's sister, well remembered this occasion—the eulogy and its reception.

Brown left school in March, 1849, and read by himself at home till he went up to Oxford in October.

The interval seems to have been an anxious one, and even before he left school he was considering his future and writing about it to his revered friend Archdeacon Moore. His gratitude to this friend was

warmly expressed at the time, but he has left a more enduring record of it in some reminiscences<sup>1</sup> written for another friend long afterwards.

In these letters he discusses ways and means most earnestly, asks about the societies which help those who require assistance to go to the University, and discusses his claim on the fund which had been established in aid of the widows and children of clergy in the Manx diocese. In speaking of this he is most careful to provide against any infringement of his mother's claim. 'I cannot long remain<sup>2</sup> dependent upon her, and if I cannot procure, by some means or other, maintenance at the University, I must enter upon some other employment less congenial to my tastes, but more satisfactory to my finances than literature.'

'My hopes may be, and indeed I fear are, too sanguine, but they can never be realized as a matter of course without making a trial. . . . With regard to my age, I was eighteen last May.'

'Literature'—'sanguine hopes.' The schoolboy of eighteen may have thought of another and more ambitious fulfilment even than a brilliant University career, but assuredly the man had his share of the 'employment most congenial to him,' however impeded by others less congenial.

Some of his friends had suggested a Dublin degree, it being possible to stand for examinations for a degree there without residence. In common with all who

<sup>1</sup> Vide *infra*, Appendix. I am indebted for them to the kindness of the Rev. E. Kissack, then Curate of Kirk Andreas. The occasion was the dedication of a memorial in the church to the Archdeacon.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Archdeacon Moore, November 24, 1848.

have any sentiment about a University, and not least with all who have a sentiment about Trinity College, Dublin, this 'hocus-pocus fashion of going to Dublin' was 'repugnant' to the boy of eighteen; his object was—'not a degree at any price to cover my nakedness, but the acquisition of academical learning.'

Eventually, through the efforts of Archdeacon Moore and the Bishop of St. Asaph (Dr. Short), he was admitted by Dean Gaisford to a servitorship at Christ Church. 'The opening is made,' he writes. 'I trust I shall never forget to whom I owe the first application of the wedge.'

What the position of a servitor was between 1850 and 1852 he himself told the public in an article in *Macmillan's Magazine*; and though I have heard that there is exaggeration in this article, there is no doubt he did not exaggerate what the position was to him. I have heard him refer to it over and over again with a dispassionate bitterness which there was no mistaking. There were, however, escapes. He must be thought, he fears, 'a very discontented restless being. . . . After all, the lines have fallen unto me in *comparatively* pleasant places.' One of his letters to his mother gives an account of a great walk to Cumnor full of literary and other interest, and Dr. Fowler 'retains a vivid recollection of many pleasant rambles with him through Bagley Wood, Stow Wood (both of which were then unenclosed), over Shotover, Boar's Hill, and specially through the Happy Valley, which was his favourite walk.' He speaks, too, of Brown's 'racy anecdotes picked up in the vacations'; of

literary conversation; how he luxuriated in English poetry, and how fond he was of 'such quaint books as Wood's *Athenae Oxonienses*.'

'Going on the river up Godstow way,' as well as other pleasant things, are recorded in the letters. Not the least is the kindness and appreciation of Dean Gaisford 'in all his dealings with me.' Yet that excellent man and famous scholar, for whom Brown had an unbounded admiration, absolutely refused to nominate him, after his two First Classes, to a Studentship, though urged to do so by all the resident Students (Tutors and Censors included). "A servitor," he says, "never has been elected Student—*ergo* he never shall be"—an interesting specimen of ratio-cination'!! After this, the bitterness about the servitorship is hardly to be wondered at. At any rate, he records that the first night after his double First was 'one of the most intensely miserable I was ever called to endure.'

Besides the Dean, Dr. Jacobson, Regius Professor of Divinity, was very kind and appreciative, sending him a present of books on account of his excellent examination in the Craven Scholarship. It is also very pleasant to hear of 'the delight, the sincere and unaffected heartiness with which the men (both Tutors and undergrads (*sic*)) congratulated' him on his First.

There was another kind of 'escape' on which he lays characteristic emphasis—music; perhaps at all times the greatest solace of his life. 'R. possesses an excellent piano, and was agreeably surprised to find that I was more than a match for him on that

instrument. I do not know of anything that gave me more pleasure during the whole Term than that pleasant ramble over the keys, after my two months' fast.'

There is an allusion in one of his early letters to his pleasure in Aristophanes; and I have heard him describe how the lecturer would leave the construing to him and another undergraduate of similar vivacity, and how it was a sort of ἐπιδείξις of emulation in reproducing the spirit of the original—even to the giving of Scotch or Irish equivalents for the dialect passages.

I have already mentioned his close reading in his early Oxford days, but from this he desisted in vacation, at least latterly, even confessing to 'a reactionary fit of laziness'; but it is characteristic that the next sentence speaks of the helpfulness of the school library; 'a library, by-the-bye, which seems to exist for my special use and benefit, for I don't know of any one besides myself who troubles it much.'

His feeling about libraries was always the same. Within the last ten years I remember his speaking to me of some eminent person who had asked him to lunch. 'I shall think quite differently of him now,' he said. 'After lunch he took me to his library, and left me there *alone*, for two hours.' The *humanity* of this greatly impressed him.

'His academical career,' says Dr. Fowler, 'may be truly described as a peculiarly brilliant one.' He not only obtained a double First Class in 1853, but 'found himself in April, 1854, in the proud position

of a Fellow of Oriel.' Bishop Fraser was one of the examiners, and long afterwards spoke to one of Brown's friends of his English Essay in the Fellowship examination.

One of the things I remember which he referred to with genuine gratification was an evening at Oriel not long after his election, when he sat next Dean Church, who consulted him, with a most complimentary deference, on some literary point.

'He never took kindly,' Dr. Fowler thinks, 'to the life of an Oxford Fellow.' 'He had no wish,' he wrote as an undergraduate to Archdeacon Moore, 'to fatten on a Fellowship,' 'an Oxford Tutorship did not attract him'; and after a few terms of private pupils he returned to his native island, and presently accepted the office of Vice-Principal of King William's College<sup>1</sup>.

In the following year (1857) Dr. Fowler 'had the pleasure of making a journey to the Isle of Man for the purpose of marrying him, at the quaint little church of Kirk Maughold, to his cousin Miss Stowell, the daughter of Dr. Stowell of Ramsey.'

While he was a bachelor master at King William's College, Mr. Wilson used to 'spend short portions of Cambridge vacations with him' in his lodgings at Derby Haven. 'What do I recall? First, the little fishing-boat or skiff. In glorious early mornings or half-holiday afternoons, out we would go into the "Race" that runs off Fort Island and Langness, with a long line to catch mackerel, in a breeze that

<sup>1</sup> He was ordained deacon before leaving Oxford: he did not proceed to priest's orders till near the end of his time at Clifton.



brought the gunwale far nearer to the water than I liked.

And he'd sit in the stern and he'd tuck his tails,  
And well he knew how to handle the sails.

And then there were the evenings in his lodgings, or elsewhere, with Van Laun or others. *O noctes cenaeque deum!* the *cenae* simple enough. But such stories and conversations, and involuntary mimicry—every story told so as to reproduce the very man of whom the story was told. Then he went to the Crypt School <sup>1</sup>, Gloucester, and I went to Rugby.'

The time at Gloucester he greatly disliked, though he tells his mother he is gradually become very thick-skinned in presence of annoyances; but he does not deny his longing for his island, and is 'one of the most patriotic exiles it can boast,' quite thrilled by the associations of heather and gorse when he finds them in the Forest of Dean.

He still corresponded with Mr. Wilson; and when the Bishop of Hereford (Dr. Percival) was appointed to Clifton College, he asked Mr. Wilson if he knew of some one to take the Modern Side. 'I named Brown; and he came over (to Rugby) to be interviewed. He spent an evening at my lodgings. About half a dozen

<sup>1</sup> There is but one thing of importance to chronicle about what he called 'the Gloucester episode.' The letters that survive are not many, and not specially characteristic. I only remember one phrase (besides those in the letters printed) that could be so described. It is about the Great Exhibition of 1862—'this bewildering madhouse of the arts!' The one thing of importance is the fact that his friend Mr. W. E. Henley was his pupil at Gloucester. I believe they did not meet for more than thirty years. Young as Mr. Henley was at the time, Brown had made an indelible impression, and they corresponded for years before they met.



of us dined there. I warned Brown that he must be on his good behaviour. He did not take my advice. Never was Brown so great. I still remember the Manx songs with their odd discordant pianoforte accompaniment and final shriek ; the paradoxes ; the torrent of fun and talk ; and the stories :—

Stories, stories, nothing but stories,  
Spinnin' away to the height of your glories.

Percival, I think, was the first to leave, his usual gravity having been completely shattered<sup>1</sup>. Next morning I asked him, not without anxiety, what he thought of Brown. "Oh, he'll do," said Percival. And so he came to Clifton<sup>2</sup>.

But this was not the only interview. The Bishop of Hereford recalls another, and a characteristically different one. The *varium et mutabile* in Brown was called out by nothing so much as by places, and the mood in Rugby was not the mood in Oxford.

'You ask me,' the Bishop writes, 'about T. E. Brown's coming to Clifton, and I can only reply that I have no story to tell about it. The events of thirty-six years have overlaid the memory of our first acquaintance. It will, however, interest all Cliftonians

<sup>1</sup> A description of another such evening may be quoted from some reminiscences communicated by Canon Rawnsley to Mr. J. R. Mozley. He recalls 'specially a long after-supper-time at the Head at Keswick, when one went right through a great part of "The Doctor" before one thought of the stars and the rising moon, and the weary landlady and the locked house-door, and the work of the morrow. And one stole back home a guilty and ashamed thing to find the light above Skiddaw, which had never quite died, was moving towards Helvellyn, and one felt that bed was almost an impossibility ; one had been so wakened all over by Brown's wild spirits, his loud peals of laughter, his merry wit, his boisterous almost schoolboy fun.'

<sup>2</sup> In the year 1863.

to know that it is to our friend Archdeacon Wilson, himself destined afterwards to contribute so much to the life of the school, that Clifton owes T. E. B. and all the wealth of associations that cluster round his name and his memory.

‘By some strange mischance he had become Head Master of the Crypt School, Gloucester. How he got there I do not know. The explanation may possibly be the very simple one that the brilliant young Fellow of Oriel, characteristically disregarding all thoughts of worldly prospects, and yielding to the impulse of his romantic Manx temperament, had married his cousin and turned his back on Oxford; and so, like many another poor man, had to take up such work as came to hand.

‘Mr. Wilson having told me about him, I made an appointment to see him in Oxford, and there, as chance would have it, I met him standing at the corner of St. Mary’s Entry, in a somewhat Johnsonian attitude, four-square, his hands deep in his pockets to keep himself still, and looking decidedly *volcanic*<sup>1</sup>.

‘We very soon came to terms, and I left him there under promise to come to Clifton as my colleague at the beginning of the following Term; and, needless

<sup>1</sup> The Bishop of Hereford has elsewhere given a larger meaning to this epithet. ‘To compare Brown with the average run of even the most distinguished men who are all around us is like trying to compare the Bay of Naples with an English bay or Scotch loch. We can find plenty of beauty in the familiar northern scenes; but we miss the pent-up forces, the volcanic outbursts, the tropic glow, and all the surprisingly manifold and tender and sweet-scented outpourings of soil and sunshine, so spontaneous, so inexhaustibly rich, and with the great heat of fire burning and palpitating underneath all the time.’

to say, St. Mary's Entry has had an additional interest to me ever since.

‘ Sometimes I have wondered, and it would be worth a good deal to know, what thoughts were coursing through that richly furnished, teeming brain as he stood there by St. Mary's Church, with Oriel College in front of him—thoughts of his own struggles and triumphs, and of all the great souls that had passed to and fro over the pavement around him ; and all set in the lurid background of the undergraduate life to which he had been condemned as a servitor at Christ Church.

‘ His father's well-intentioned friend the Archdeacon of Man, knowing the scanty resources of the Manx parsonage and the need of economy, but apparently not knowing either the temperament or the genius of the boy, had advised his going as a servitor to Christ Church ; and purblind teachers let him go, instead of sending him to some such place as Balliol, where he might worthily have been enrolled as one of the most highly gifted of her scholars. However, I need not trouble you with these reflections, for they are neither a relevant nor an adequate answer to your inquiry, and yet they are all I have to send.’

With Brown's coming to Clifton<sup>1</sup> this memoir, as memoir, may end. I have been able to procure some reminiscences of a colleague older than myself who saw much of Brown in the earlier days of the school, and also those of a distinguished pupil. The first are important, not merely from the point of view of friendship, but because the writer speaks with authority

<sup>1</sup> He resigned his mastership in July, 1892, and made his home for the last five years of his life in the Isle of Man (Ramsey).

on a subject most vital to Brown's happiness and closely bound up with his personality—that of music. The second are not less important, as giving the judgment of a man of letters on Brown as a teacher. It was known that Brown rather resented his calling, and it was generally believed that he was ineffective and indifferent as a teacher. Boys, I think, in this matter were more discerning than some of their elders. They were quite aware that some lessons did not interest him, and that he gave himself little trouble over them; but where the literature or the history was great they recognized—quite undistinguished pupils recognized—the difference, and spoke of those lessons as things they could never forget. Moreover, some of this testimony was quite recent and did not belong to his earlier time.

The boys, however, knew of him in other aspects than that of a teacher—for he both preached and lectured (on Sunday evenings). Of one of the most impressive sermons I shall give some extracts later. The element of surprise awaited us here as elsewhere. I shall never forget his inculcating on the school the duty of leading the common life: and how without emphasis, but with quiet irony, he met the supposed objection—that the child of genius could not be fettered by the requirements of a system—‘Be content, my friends; he has not come to us yet’!

His lectures or addresses—sometimes written, sometimes ‘inimitable brilliant talk’—were equally unforgettable. I wish I could give a list of his subjects—sometimes he talked of music, sometimes of literature. (Three were on Hooker, Crabbe, and Quarles.) Once he told us the story of the Peel life-boat, another

time he lectured on 'Manners.' Archdeacon Wilson reminds me of its most characteristic passage: 'I am certain God made fools for us to enjoy, but there must be *an economy of joy* in the presence of a fool; you must not betray your enjoyment.'

It did not matter whether he was reading or talking; what was seen and heard was an individuality by which the least interesting, least interested part of his audience must have been arrested as no presence had ever arrested them before.

What else there is to tell of his uneventful life at Clifton, so full of interest to himself and others, and of the last five years in his island, must be left to the letters to tell.

It must not however be forgotten that *Betsy Lee* and all his published poetry were written, and all except his last volume published, while he was at Clifton. Whatever name and fame they brought him came to him here: and the pleasure and solace of writing verse helped more than most things to fill his life with content.

'Name and fame' are words one has a right to use, in spite of the fact that the poems cannot be called well known. *Betsy Lee*, when it appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* (May and April, 1873), drew from 'George Eliot' a notable tribute, and that was far from being the only recognition of a new poet by those who spoke with authority. *Betsy Lee* was published separately in 1873 by Messrs. Macmillan, and *Fo'c's'le Yarns* (including *Betsy Lee*) in 1881 (a second edition appeared in 1889). Messrs. Swan Sonnenschein & Co. published in 1887 *The Doctor and*

*other Poems*. This volume bore his name, as did also *The Manx Witch and other Poems*, in 1889, and *Old John and other Poems*, in 1893. The two last-named volumes were published by Messrs. Macmillan.

In the *Quarterly Review* of April, 1898, appeared a notice at once discriminating and informing of his poetry as a whole.

I may be allowed perhaps to say something from my own experience of the rarest personality that it has been my fortune to be acquainted with. In some respects I was disqualified for the fullest intimacy. For one thing I was, in his own phrase, *in partibus immusicorum*, and that was the gentlest of his phrases about this deficiency. Then his poems in dialect, though I enjoyed them, never appealed to me as his last volume did, and this should have been, to a less generous man, another disqualification.

Of the sea again, the object of his passionate devotion, I knew nothing as I ought to know. This *egotism*<sup>1</sup> is, I hope, pardonable, for it is necessary if I am to explain how his many-sided nature could so support an unequal friendship that the inequality was hardly felt.

I had been some two years at Clifton before I got to know Brown: but after our intimacy began I found fresh occasion for wonder every year at some new revelation of character and capacity. The first

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oakeley apologizing for himself may apologize for others also: 'One divines of one so rich and bounteous that to each of his friends he gave a different fortune. . . . Thus I seek to prepare the way for the otherwise crude remark, "None knew him as I did"' (Letter on hearing of Brown's death).

thing that not unnaturally invited friendship was his extraordinary gift of sympathy. The small things which interested his friends—the small pleasures and the small pains—were never below his reach. The merest fragment of ‘coterie speech’ was worth explaining to him. You were so certain of his gauging its significance to you. *Humani nihil a me alienum puto* was the motto of his talk as of his letters; but *humani* is not enough to say, for the personal interest went far beyond that, and this is one reason why so many of the letters to friends can only be represented by extracts. He gave himself without stint, his time, his thought, his powers; but the self was the greatest gift of all. That best self—its humour, its brilliance, its infinite variety—was all poured out for the single friend. Indeed the single friend was more likely to get that best than a large company, for he said of himself, as Cowper did, that he had a large stock of silence always at command, and this silence was more commonly seen in large companies.

He was just the man for unequal friendships. Nothing that he ever said or did would hint to one that he thought of himself as a shade better than his fellows. Only when one had time to reflect on an evening with him or a walk with him in which he had flashed into phrase after phrase or fancy after fancy, did it suddenly strike one that these novelties were all individual, that they were all different expressions of one and the same personality, and that neither your optimism nor your experience had prepared you for meeting such a man in ordinary life—‘a man



that would be incredible had one not known him,' as Fitzgerald said of Spedding. One can be grateful now, one could not then, for the illusion of equality was never disturbed.

One is conscious now of much self-reproach, thinking of all the chances of enlargement, and the scant use made of them: then one only thought of enjoyment. They were times of refreshing to look back to all one's life:—

Or other worlds they seemed, or happy isles.

But apart from the courtesy and generosity, the affection and consideration, which drew from all who called him friend the tribute of admiring love, there was that which made the merest acquaintance stand at gaze; something 'elemental, absolute, infallible'—to use three of his favourite adjectives about great men and great things. When he thus 'let himself go,' he would characterize things and persons with truthfulness so vivid or paradox so grotesque that delight was almost smothered in gasping astonishment. His humour was then at the top of its bent, and his mimicry simply indescribable. I have watched him while he altered his face almost, and his voice wholly beyond recognition, when he was personating some one in a story he was telling. Mimicry is indeed possible to very common natures; but theirs is 'the mirth without images' of which Rasselas speaks. Brown's mimicry was often caricature, but it was the caricature of an overflowing imagination, not the caricature of a photograph. He could be Rabelaisian too at times, though always with a reservation very characteristic of him. 'There are,' he said,



‘ nice Rabelaisians, and there are nasty Rabelaisians; but the latter are *not* Rabelaisians.’

Here, as elsewhere, nothing human, no one phase of human nature’s many moods, was alien to him.

There was something too which seemed to separate him from other men in the kind and degree of his sympathy with external nature. He was himself conscious of this to some extent, and has expressed it in his letters (I think he is speaking of a late spring day in his beloved marsh country, the Curragh). ‘ These are the times,’ he said, ‘ when my highest power comes to me.’

Nor shall I ever forget his ecstasy over Fair Head in the County Antrim when we visited it together in 1895. It was worth going many miles to see.

This feeling of intimacy with external nature was one he cherished very carefully. ‘ I like,’ he said, ‘ to stay in a country till I know it in and out. That is far more to me than seeing many places.’

But whatever this intimacy was, it was not like his other gifts. One felt oneself outside ; one looked on, one could not share. As one friend said, ‘ He seemed in possession of some great secret of nature which he was not free to impart to us.’

Another thing that was quite unlike anything I have known in others was the universal quality of his literary sympathy, and its intensity. This did more than anything else to establish our friendship ; for though vast tracts of literature where he could ‘ rest and expatiate ’ were unknown to me, my own meagre domain seemed larger and richer when he expounded our common affection for it.

‘Expounded’ is a very poor word—though it is something to have the best reasons given for the faith that is in you, even when you feel your instinct beyond and above criticism.

But really it was nothing that could be called exposition. It was the spontaneous outflow of feeling deeper than one’s own because the whole nature was deeper:—

And while we others sip the obvious sweet,  
    . . . . . Lo! this man hath made haste  
And pressed the sting that holds the central seat.

It was no creed to be recited, it was an atmosphere in which he lived and breathed, that highest of all literary atmospheres, where the ingredients are all the humanities—love, respect, admiration, all clinging to the most sacred tradition of civilized man. ‘Suffer no chasm,’ he once said to the school in a sermon, ‘to interrupt this glorious tradition. . . . Continuous life . . . that is what we want—to feel the pulses of hearts that are now dust.’

‘I could cry,’ he once said to me, ‘over those old classical hymns of Addison.’ The classical conventions moved him even while they amused him. He smiled, but the water stood in his eyes.

I do not think I have ever known a pleasure greater than finding some great or good thing in literature that he did not happen to know. Such occasions were few, as might be expected, but the pleasure was hardly less when one revived an old affection for him—a forgotten favourite.

And his analysis of beauties—when he would stoop to analysis, for he did not love ‘to reason about

beauties rather than to taste them'—never failed to satisfy.

I once drew his attention to the beautiful phrase of Steele, in the *Tatler*, about Favonius, the good clergyman, leaving the house of mourning 'with such a glow of grief and of humanity upon his countenance.' 'Ah, yes!' he said, 'and it's the *hendiadys* that does it!' and one feels at once how poor *humane grief* would sound beside it!

But independently of literature all associations moved him, and not his own merely. That is why 'coterie speech' had such a value for him. And he loved to have the fact or the legend out of which it sprang recovered for him with all its details. There was something specially delightful in the ease with which he could transplant, from another's experience, a story or a saying, and regrow it in his own more fertilizing soil. It is no wonder that he had friends, for such common possessions rivet an intimacy as nothing else can.

His own associations were, it need hardly be said, all deep-rooted. His favourite Virgilian saw was *Antiquam exquirite matrem*, and he seemed to think the chief value of his poems was 'the cairn of memories' he had built in them. Even quite local and temporary associations were sacred to him. He saw his past steadily, and saw it whole, and the historical past he saw in the same way. 'In reading,' he once said, 'let heart reach to heart across all obstacles of time, and manners, and ideas.'

I cannot but think that this was a great part of the meaning he assigned to his favourite text: 'Keep

thy heart with all diligence.' He knew that the bent of intellect might shift with reading or experience; temper might be liable to moods, and disappoint either himself or others; but this other thing—the τὸ κυριώτατον, the heart, the proper self—

That imperial murex grain

No carrack ever bore to Thames or Tiber—

this must be cherished for what it was, must be still in a sense what it was—a self that vicissitude could not invade.

It was naturally not a thing he spoke of, but there were hints of it, to those who knew him, even in his talk; and in some of the letters, and in many of the poems in his last volume, it needs little interpretation to discover it. From the heart in this sense it is an easy transition to the 'kind of enthusiasm' with which uncommon men 'mingle their ideas.' In family affection, in friendship, in patriotism local or national, the sentiment is the same. It is not only *quorum pars magna fui*; it is also, 'what these things have made of me nothing can unmake.'

Under the impelling force of these associations he unshrinkingly confessed himself emotional, even using the half-humorous phrase I have already quoted—'I am a born sobber.'

His fine curiosity was insatiable, but this was something related in no way to advances in knowledge or new refinements in feeling. It was something permanent and central to himself and yet universal in its range.

There is a beautiful passage in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, where<sup>1</sup> Dorothea, asked what she is

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from memory. The *ipsissima verba* run thus: 'Dodo, how

thinking of, says, 'All the troubles of all the people in the world.' Now it might be thought that, with Brown's high spirits and recklessly gay humour, this is a singularly inapposite quotation. But really it is very relevant. I have never known a man with so wide an intellectual range, or of such infinite brightness, who could be so deeply saddened by his own sympathies—sympathies reaching far back into his own far past, or extended to present trouble, ever so remote from himself.

This, I think, is the heart which he tried to keep with all diligence—the depth which he suffered no excursions of fancy to explore, no exuberance of spirits to disturb.

Of his life in this region—of the life of his lonelier self—not many, if any, of his friends were permitted to see much, yet it interfered in no way with his readiness to render all kinds of services. Those services rendered in abundant measure were much: but to possess a sense of security, a recognized claim to divide pleasures and pains without misgiving, was a thing beyond all price in friendship. That this should be possible to one who had so full a life of his own unshared, and not to be shared by others, means a very rare unselfishness. Nor did he suffer such claims to be weakened by absence. For the five years that remained to him after he returned to his island his letters never failed. He was never oppressed by the labour of keeping friendships in repair, but rather exhilarated; at any rate he left his friends

bright your eyes are! . . . I wonder what (has happened).' . . .  
'Oh, all the troubles of all people on the face of the earth.'

exhilarated and something more. Those who received his letters found in them such a store of help, such a heightening of the interest of life, that to others—to those who had not enjoyed his personal talk—it might have seemed that little could have been added by actual intercourse.

Brown was a keen critic of all his friends, and did not deny himself amusement at the weaknesses and limitations of those he cared for most. But there was one thing about him not often found in men who indulge in the mood of Democritus. I mean the willingness to take trouble for those whose failings amused him, even when he thought there was some connexion between their unwisdom and their need. I don't think he could for the life of him help giving free play to his humour, but it never weakened his friendship. He was even so anxious in their behalf as to transform himself on occasion into what he once called 'Machiavelli Brown,' and draw on his experience to play the diplomatist in their interest. His courtesy would never suffer him to be the candid friend. In these matters he contended for what he called 'the finest Keltic make-believe,' and was indignant at its being confounded with 'humbug.' ('Oh, those English!' he would say.) To him this 'finest make-believe' was a part of the code of good manners, and if he criticized his friends to others, they knew better than those others how little it impaired his power to love and his eagerness to serve.

To manners he always attached a value which is less common in these days. 'If I lose my manners,'

he said once over some trivial forgetfulness, 'what is to become of me?'

But the thing that will stay longest with his friends was the amount and variety of positive pleasure that he gave them. Five minutes in his company was a more exhilarating tonic than any that could be devised. Tonic is the right word, for more than one reason, when his talk was of literature : for his sanity was as steadying to the judgment as his enthusiasm was lifting to the spirit. If there was a side of literature that appealed less to him than to others, I can find no word less inclusive than catholic to do justice to his range of sympathy. And his catholicity of taste was especially remarkable in one whose strength of imagination might be supposed to have made him somewhat impatient of the ancient ways and the less ambitious ages when writers were content 'to dwell quiet and secure.' While he welcomed power in every new direction, his faith in the old teachers, the *pauci quos æquus amavit Iuppiter*, never swerved.

In the sermon from which I have already quoted he preached his own practice. 'Those,' he said, 'who have been and are great amongst us are those who have dwelt most reverently, or at least most habitually, under the shadow of the sky-pointing pyramids of the past.'

But I must not go on. I have already, perhaps, said too much, though in another sense too much could not be said.

'Tis true ; but all too weakly said ;

'Twas more significant, he's dead.



There is a simple sentence in another letter-writer, not often so simple, who very occasionally recalls Brown, though with a difference; and this sentence—it is Charles Lamb's—tells Brown's friends better than any words of their own what their individual loss is, and why they can never see his place filled for them.

'One sees a picture, reads an anecdote, starts a casual fancy, and thinks to tell of it to this person in preference to every other. The person is gone whom it would peculiarly have suited—it won't do for another.'

#### MR. E. M. OAKELEY'S REMINISCENCES.

Looking back on my friendship with Mr. Brown, which began a very few days after I became a Clifton master in 1867, and knew no break till the great break in October, 1897, I realize only too keenly, now that he is gone, 'the difference to me.' Many, of course, are feeling the same; yet not quite the same, for it may easily be guessed that a nature so rich and so bounteous as his showed a different side to each friend, so that many can without arrogance say, 'No one knew him as I did.' Of late I had seen him but seldom, but I continued to hear from him pretty often till very near his end; and for the rest, as he once wrote to me, 'there are people with whom to coexist is life: no need to see them or talk to them. All that is needed is just to think—say in your bath at 7 a.m.—"Hugh also is."'

Mr. Brown's love of music was a side of him often turned to the present writer, and music was a chief corner-stone of our friendship. In early



Clifton days I induced him to go up with me to hear Clara Schumann play; a memorable experience in many ways, not least from our accidentally sitting next to Madame Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt, to whom, as he reminded me as lately as October, 1897, I took the opportunity to introduce him. At about the same date, by the way, we went, with Dr. Percival, to see the Clifton match at Lord's, the chief hero of which was just then the pride of Brown's House at Clifton, as afterwards of his College and University<sup>1</sup>. T. E. B. was in great force, and lit up the dingy dining-room of our hotel—quite innocent then of to-day's Asiatic splendours—with many a flash of that 'lightning of the brain, lambent but innocuous,' that one associates with his conversation.

It must have been in that same summer that I used to sit with him in the Fifth Form room of his house, in the holidays an uncommonly secluded *sanctum*, in order to discuss words and tunes for the School Hymn Book, on which a committee of masters and boys had been for some time at work. It was then and there that Wesley's fine hymn, with the recurring line 'Give me thy only love,' was re-edited to make it fit Bach's soaring music, which seems to yearn to bear on its wings some such refrain as Wesley's. To the same *symposia* the hymn book owes Mr. Brown's noble Ascension-tide hymn. It was agreed that the *tune* of '*Es ist das Heil*' must be secured for the book; but

<sup>1</sup> Cecil William Boyle, the 'dear hero' of the lines in a recent *Spectator* by his school-fellow, T. Herbert Warren, the President of Magdalen. He fell at Boshof, April 5, 1900,

'Captaining men as once he captained boys.'

the ponderous unwieldiness of the German original, which refused on almost any terms to be carried over or coaxed into English, suggested the fortunate alternative—that ‘some one’ should write a new hymn, suitable to the peculiar sentiment, and especially to the pathetic closing cadence, of the music. No other hymn-tune was so dear to him, except perhaps the well-known *Passion Chorale*, of which—in a blue-pencilled note one Monday morning during first lesson—he sent me the following ‘appreciation’ :—

Ὁ κλέψ Βροῦνος. . . .

(Yesterday, when you were playing the miraculous ‘Haupt<sup>1</sup>.’)

Chance-child of some lone sorrow on the hills,  
 Bach finds a babe ; instant the great heart fills  
 With love of that fair innocence,  
 Conveys it thence,  
 Clothes it with all divinest harmonies,  
 Gives it sure foot to tread the dim degrees  
 Of Pilate’s stair. Hush ! Hush ! Its last sweet  
                   breath  
 Wails far along the passages of death.



I quote this as a specimen of the writer’s method of musical criticism ; a method equally remote from the

<sup>1</sup> The version played was No. 27, vol. v, of Bach’s organ works. This is mentioned out of kindness prepense, that Bach-lovers may turn to it again. They will have their reward ! The melody originally belonged to a popular sixteenth century love song.

usual style of describers of music, the 'piling of honey on sugar and sugar on honey' (as Lamb writes in a slightly different connexion), as from the heresy of the *Leit-Motif* fanatics who used to pester Mendelssohn to tell them 'the meaning' of his *Songs without Words*. So far was Brown from desiring to trace 'meanings' in instrumental music, that even in the *vocal* works of the great composers he held that the so-called setting was distinctly 'the predominant partner,' and that, except as a crib for the unlearned, the words would often be better away. Thus, for instance, he writes of his own beautiful translation of those lines of Eichendorff which Schumann has immortalized by linking them to his *Frühlingsnacht*:—

'Here is the *Frühlingsnacht*—might be better, though I think it is not exactly bad. . . .

'*Wandervögel* is a lovely word. I suppose he does not mean birds *in* his garden, but birds passing over it, invisible, though audible to him. "Birds of passage" is not altogether prosaic—incline thine ear, perpend, what thinkest? In the second verse I have imported a little wild-fire. The tune seems to comport it; but "reappears" is an old rhyme-*famulus*, and it does not either comport or support the *ritardando* as well as *Mondes Glanz herein*. In fact I feel the German even to be rather lacking . . . and taking it altogether, don't you regard this song of Schumann's as transcending words—*Über Worte?*—*Procul, O Procul!* The poets are not in it. I warn them off the ground. When Schumann is in this mood, they had better retire. The mysteries are too sacred, the *pudicitia* of the absolute ought not to be violated.

It is divine—divine! Look at those wretched words as they sidle up in their smugness to the heavenly creature! What earthly right have they there? She does not want them. “A parcel of the purest sky,”—that is the *Frühlingsnacht*. And this——libretto to think of holding his vulgar umbrella over her—faugh<sup>1</sup>! The translation follows:—

#### A NIGHT OF SPRING.

O'er the garden, northward yearning,  
 Birds of passage on the wing  
 Give the note of Spring's returning,  
 And the odours of the Spring.  
 Shall I shout for very gladness,  
 Shall I drown my eyes in tears,  
 Is it mirth, or is it madness,  
 When the spring-tide reappears?  
 Moon and stars proclaim her willing,  
 Whisp'ring groves their vows combine,  
 And the nightingales are thrilling—  
 ‘She is thine, ah, she is thine!’

Here is his translation of *Meine Rose*, another of Schumann's loveliest songs:—

#### MY ROSE.

When Summer's sun is glowing,  
 And roses still are blowing,  
 If but I note one drooping,  
 Its lovely head down stooping,

<sup>1</sup> To somewhat the same effect Philipp Spitta writes: ‘In Schumann's songs the function of the pianoforte is to reveal some deep and secret meaning which is beyond the power of words to express.’

I bring with timely shower  
Refreshment to my flower.  
Blest Rose, that art the dearest !  
Heart's Rose, the sweetest, nearest,  
O'erwhelm'd with care and sadness,  
Ah me ! the joy, the gladness  
If at thy feet outpouring  
My soul, I lay adoring !  
Life's self I would surrender  
To see thee rise in splendour<sup>1</sup>.

Brown's method of musical criticism, in which (naturally !) the seemingly 'far-fetched' fancies of the poet convey an impression far more adequate than the usual attempt to describe the indescribable by mere inventory, or mere superlatives, may be further illustrated by the following description of a Crystal Palace concert :—

' . . . I have said nothing about the choral *annexe* to the ninth symphony. No circumstances could be more unfavourable to a choir ; when your ears have been stung for upwards of an hour by the most delicious string poison, 'the human voice divine' is simply grotesque. There is one passage where the tenors lead off. Well, it sounded almost like a poor melancholy laugh, as of idiots. And indeed they had not even their note quite true. Then you remember a chorus takes off suddenly, and leaves a quartet exposed in mid-field. This is a most

<sup>1</sup> The original seems to express despair of this result. I have not made it so strong. Any man, reducing himself to a watering-pot, has a right to expect success, or something of the kind.—T. E. B.

exquisite machine, to my mind. It is as if a thunderstorm suddenly cleared away, and four stars shone out in a sweet quaternion of solitude. It ought to be that. A calm soft kiss on the forehead of retreating turbulence. But what did these people do? It was Winkle torn from Weller. They seemed so frightened: quite ghastly. Nothing to sit down on! And in such *impari materia*! Another stuff; not four threads spun finely, deftly forth from the big choral web, and streaming on a summer sigh of balm—but dingy floccy alien tatters tossed up obscenely from a dust-heap. Yet Alversleben seemed not inadequate; the others, so help me sweet Cecilia, did not know “wherefore they were come together”!’

And of another performance of the same symphony:—

‘The absolutely celestial coda was now and then as unerring as I could desire; but once, if I mistake not, nearly fell to pieces. It was a fearful moment; as if your dearest and loveliest on earth were suddenly to totter on the verge of madness, and say wicked and impure words. . . . Ophelia . . . I felt quite giddy. But it was soon over, and the darling shone out bright and calm and peerless as ever.

‘What heavenly peace! What healing of all wounds! Binding of all broken hearts! Everlasting *remedium amoris*! I certainly found myself praying, and that fervently. With such a Christ to clasp to her withered breast, what need the poor old world care for Strauss and all his angels?’

At the rehearsal of this concert :—

‘It was even more interesting than the concert. Manns unfettered by the proprieties, mad, springing to his feet, hurling himself at the band like a tiger, like a thunderbolt, like a conical bullet, like a little black devil! A splendid and never-to-be-forgotten sight. I saw his dodges, and more or less comprehended them.’

At a Crystal Palace organ recital :—

‘There was Mr. X. pounding away at some screaming indecency. I waited for his second piece, though much dejected, but as it was only some sugary or rather rum-and-sugary Operatic *rifacimento*, I came away, and left him up to his ears in Organ treacle.’ . . .

(He returned, however; for—)

‘Smart’s Andante in D is a pretty thing enough, not so much crisp as mincing. In our poor friend’s hands it assumed an air of the fatuously dissolute.’

On British musical taste, *circa* 1870, he writes :—

‘We have been getting fonder of music, and of good music. In some fashion—rather haphazard, perhaps—we have been learning to know good music when we hear it. No doubt the middle-class drawing-room, that last fortress of error, is much where it was. Time-honoured shrine of die-away, sigh-away adolescence, it still resounds to the strains of the Valérie Whites and the Molloyes. But the Teutonic invasion has told; Mendelssohn has almost obtained the Britannic *civitas*, and even Schumann stands—uncertain, it is true—upon the threshold. And if we pass from the drawing-room to the concert



hall, the state of affairs is positively encouraging. Here are great organs magnificently played; here is Bach; here is a band; here are Beethoven, Berlioz, Wagner, all the gods.' . . .

In 1894 Brown made a much-looked-forward-to pilgrimage to Bayreuth; of which he writes (before starting):—

'I am to hear *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Parsifal* (the last, twice). This will be a good *βάπτειν* in the Wagnerian Siloam.'

(From Bayreuth:—)

'I am waiting here for a *noch einmal* of *Parsifal*. But you may depend on it that the *cultus* is a little unsound. Talk is big, and make-believe bigger; but they don't do the business so superlatively well by any means.' . . .

(After the *noch einmal*:—)

'Won't do! *Parsifal* is an impossibility, and I am hugely disappointed. . . . Set to your seal that the musical drama is a tremendous but hopeless aspiration. Fall back upon Beethoven and the symphonic form, and take courage. I don't wonder at men thinking that this is a path that no one can tread after Beethoven. But this is wrong. The world is open: we can yet gather the flowers of Heaven. Not, however, in this field of combination and complication will they ever be gathered. . . . Wagner's *Wahn*—exactly so, a noble *Wahn*, but brings me no *Friede* as Wagner says it did to him—will bring *Friede* to no child of man who is born with wings, however imperfectly developed<sup>1</sup>.'

<sup>1</sup> Cf. letter from Bayreuth, Aug. 7, 1894, vol. ii, p. 51



(After returning :—)

‘Have you heard that there are to be orchestral Wagner concerts in London next November, the first to be conducted by Siegfried Wagner? That is just what I should like. The man Curtius is trying to arrange with Madame Wagner for the production of substantial portions of *Parsifal*. *Orchestral*, remember! That’s the point. As to their lewdness and superfluity of scenic naughtiness, may I never again come within a hundred miles of them!’

From Music to Mimicry, even if the two gifts be not wholly unrelated, may perhaps seem an abrupt transition. But however that may be, one cannot long think of Brown without recalling his mimicry. (His own abrupt transitions by the way—say from Bach to Balzac—used to be sufficiently amusing!) Was there one of his acquaintances whom he could not reproduce to the very life? Nay, his portraiture was in a sense *more* vivid than life, because it gave the type and idea of the man, and not merely the man himself, who might well (if modest) feel himself but a poor pale counterfeit of Brown’s revised version of him, and say on being told of it (as I once heard him say), ‘Well, I did not say quite that, but *I would have said so if I had thought of it.*’ Quite so; in a word, of most people Brown’s rendering was better far than their own! What portraits one’s memory retains of Clifton masters, boys, servants—not so much printed there from life, as due to some of those almost proverbial ‘five minutes with Brown in the masters’ room!’

And no account of his mimicry would be complete, without adding that, 'irrespective of sex or age,' he could to a wonderful degree even *look* like his subject of the moment.

How utterly without malice it all was, may be divined from the following :—

' . . . Truest and dearest of friends! My foster-father! Source of perennial joy, of laughter inextinguishable. I have mimicked him all my life, and shall I forbear now! Nay, verily, and by God's help so I won't. I did love that old man; a delicious old man: Silenus trimmed with Socrates, and turned up with . . . well . . . I don't mind, say Newman.'

Often in reading his letters over, one longs to *hear* that delightful mimicry again.

'Mr. W. was present, an invaluable grotesque. He preached the sermon—I will venture to say the most ludicrous performance of modern times. Anything like the hodge-podge of imbecility, except its author, I have never seen. This phenomenon has awaked my long-dormant faculty of mimicry; I can't refrain. Such a heaven-sent subject is not to be lighted upon every day.'

And sometimes one *does* all but hear it :—

'Their chief pastor, good man, is—well, he *is*, and that is about all that can be said. They are good worthy people; probably never open a book, a piano, or—yes, he has opened a bazaar—two bazaars, I think. Oh yes! we can do that—yes! "yess, indeet, however."'

## REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD PUPIL.—

BY MR. HORATIO F. BROWN.

The circumstances in which I came to be taught by T. E. Brown were exceptional. I and some other boys were going in for History Scholarships at Oxford. The Head Master allowed us to attend a special history class under T. E. Brown.

My recollection is that his was the most vivid teaching I ever received: great width of view and poetical, almost passionate, power of presentment. For example, we were reading Froude's *History*, and I shall never forget how it was Brown's words, Brown's voice, not the historian's, that made me feel the great democratic function which the monasteries performed in England; the view became alive in his mouth. Again the same thing happened when we came to the Reformation as it showed itself at Oxford; the vivid presentment of the passions moving both sides in the controversy, and the lively picturing of details (e.g. the Gloucester Hall scholar escaping over heavy ploughed fields), all set forth with such dramatic force, and aided by a splendid voice, left an indelible impression on my mind.

He had such an appreciation of style too. I remember that we were reading what was then thought to be an exceptionally dry and tough work, Hallam's *Constitutional History*. The way in which he delivered the passage beginning, 'But lest the spectre of indefeasible right should stand once more in arms on the tomb of the house of York,' not only fixed for ever the historical importance of the event that Hallam

was discussing, but, as it were, let me into Hallam himself, put one on terms of intelligence with the historian. Of course it was all there before, in the book itself, and other people had said it all, time and time again ; but for me it was Brown's voice, Brown's perception, that made it real. I think he got at me through the imagination.

How he struck other boys I don't know, nor yet what effect he had on his class, in which I never was. No doubt, in my case, he was dealing with things he liked to teach, and I liked to learn. He certainly had the power of making me want to please him. I have kept all the essays and question papers I did for him, with their quaint hieroglyphic scribbles on the back. He never spoke to me out of school, and I never knew him at all privately or socially at that time, but his personality made a great impression ; his slow sort of urgent walk, like Leviathan, his thick massive figure, above all his voice. I used to see him in the distance on his lonely strolls about the downs, and his figure seemed to belong to, and to explain the downs, the river, the woods, the Severn, and the far Welsh hills. I remember him walking in the rain, and looking as if he liked it, as I did. Personally, at that time I was afraid of him ; but he stirred fancy, curiosity, imagination. I should say that his educational function lay in 'widening.' He was a 'widener.' He made one feel that there was something beyond the school, beyond successful performance at lessons or at games ; there was a whiff of the great world brought in by him.

# LETTERS OF T. E. BROWN

TO HIS MOTHER.

CHRIST CHURCH,

January 26, 1851.

This morning the sermon was preached by Jowett (not of South Quay, but) of Balliol College. This man has the reputation of being an infidel, simply because he has a profound contempt for show, and humbug, and external rites. His sermon was beautiful, and seemed to me to indicate a heart sincerely interested in the subject. He is a pale, boyish, almost effeminate-looking man, something like little Deemster Drinkwater.

I needn't bother you with any maudlin laments about Little-go; Stokes, indeed, tells me that he can't imagine such a thing as my being plucked, but stranger things have happened ere now. . . . There was such a row and bustle upon leaving Hugh's, that I forgot my black top-coat, the most *indispensable* garment<sup>1</sup> I possess here. But here I must stop.

<sup>1</sup> Not without interest for those who remember the writer as they first knew him a quarter of a century later. The italics are mine.

## TO HIS MOTHER.

CHRIST CHURCH,

February 21, 1851.

. . . You've no idea how long the roads are drying here after a fall of rain: rain for five days is as good or bad as rain for twenty in the Isle of Man; it continues near the surface, and is not drawn down by fine limestone strata such as we have. . . .

A very gratifying incident occurred to me the other day. At an examination which we had some time ago here I believe I did pretty well: shortly afterwards I was surprised by Stokes telling me that Dr. Jacobson [Regius Professor of Divinity, Canon of Christ Church, &c.] wished me to call on him; well, I called twice, but he was out. Yesterday, however, as I was quietly reading in my rooms, 'tântăărăără', came to the door,' and on my somewhat gruffly (as is my wont) bidding the intruder come in, in he came; and who should it be but old Jacobson himself, ushered in with profound reverence by an astounded scout.

He stayed some time, and proved one of the freest, heartiest, and jolliest old fellows I ever met with. I always thought so, in fact, by the cut of his gib.

He spoke about the examination<sup>1</sup>, and told me that he begged I would accept a present of a book from him as a kind of memorial of the same. 'In course I hadn't no objections,' and shortly after called at his house where, after some conversation with him in his study (where, by-the-bye, he appeared in the graceful *négligé* of shirt-sleeves!!), he gave me the book, a copy of Baehr's *Herodotus*, beautifully and strongly bound

<sup>1</sup> The Craven Scholarship.

in calf gilt, in 4 vols. This was a really kind and graceful act, and I feel much obliged to the Doctor as well as to the universally benevolent Stokes, who, I fancy, must have said something rather extra about me.

And so it was (as Mary Cowle would say [Is she alive or dead?]). And I scud across the quad with four goodly tomes under my arm; and as I write they face me, about the handsomest set of books in my case, but still more valuable on account of the interesting and pleasing associations connected with them.

D. will excuse my not coinciding with her in her view of the song she sent: I don't much like it (merely as poetry); and as for sentiment, I decidedly disagree with Herr Rückert: for I think there is nothing in any language so beautiful as the long-drawn sighs of passionate melancholy expressed in our most pathetic poets. Perhaps you may think me a ninny, but whoever wrote the pleasures of melancholy<sup>1</sup> (I don't remember now) just hit my notion, if he did it well. . . .

#### TO HIS MOTHER.

CHRIST CHURCH,

*March 11, 1851.*

I was very glad to get your letter, which reached me yesterday. I had rather expected to hear before, but (as Mr. Toots said) 'it's of no consequence in the world, thank 'ee.' My health (always the primary consideration) is still unimpaired: and in fact the other day I felt quite ashamed when, after a bit of a run in the wind, I found a most delicate crimson glow spreading over my exquisite features.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Introduction, pp. 40, 41.



A fortnight ago last Monday I and another man walked about twenty-six miles; it was St. Matthias' Day (I'm much obliged to his saintship), and therefore we had no lectures; so we took the whole blessed day, and started about 10.15 a.m., after breakfast.

First we went through Cumnor, where an inn called the 'Bear and Ragged Staff' still purports to be kept by one Giles Gosling of *Kenilworth* celebrity. (This however I had been at before.) Thence we proceeded to Bablockhythe Ferry, where we crossed the Isis and kept on through very pleasant rural scenery to Stanton Harcourt, where there is a rum old Manor House, with a kitchen of earlier date than the rest of the building—being, in fact, the kitchen where good Queen Bess had her dinner cooked when staying at Stanton H. I never saw such an old thing. They were killing pigs in it when we were there.

But the most interesting part of the ramble was yet to come. A few yards from the farm-house, just at the end of the garden, there is a beautiful old tower like the kitchen, one of the remains of the old Manor House or Castle: and in an upper chamber thereof for years dwelt no less a personage than Pope the poet. His name is said to be cut on a pane of glass in one of the windows; but we could not find it. In the basement of the tower is Pope's chapel (he was a Roman Catholic), the altar still standing, and the arms of the Harcourt family, with sundry griffins and cherubims painted around. Within a few yards of this tower is the churchyard; and on the wall of the extreme end of the south transept outside is the celebrated tablet erected by Pope in memory of the

faithful rustic lovers killed by a flash of lightning in the harvest-field. I dare say you remember the lines<sup>1</sup>. I forget them just now: only I know one ends with the words—‘the flash that melts the ball.’ From Stanton Harcourt we rambled on to Eynsham, a small town on the banks of the Isis, whence, after some beer and biscuits, we proceeded to Woodstock, encountering some gipsies by the way, and skirting along Blenheim Park, leaving in the distance the ranger’s lodge in the park where the celebrated infidel Rochester died. And so we came to Woodstock, and walked into Blenheim Park, and up to the house. The house is quite a palace; we only saw the exterior, but it looked like a pretty large village: a hatchment over the front recorded the death of the late Duchess of Marlborough. There is a very beautiful lake in the park; it was sunset, and the water was so quiet in its deep loveliness; swans were rowing along in stately pride, but some unfortunate fellows took it into their heads to have a fly, and made precious fools of themselves, I must say. On the northern shore of the lake, nearly opposite the house, is ‘Fair Rosamond’s’ Well; a fine spring comes gushing out beneath the roots of the old trees, and here until of late years, I believe, there were some remains supposed to be those of the far-famed bower in which Henry II secluded his mistress.

The waters of the well, if you give your face a good

<sup>1</sup> Pope had to write a prose epitaph to satisfy Lord Harcourt; the phrase quoted in the next sentence is from the ‘godly one,’ the second of the poetical epitaphs Pope sent Lady Mary. Pope’s Works, Globe edition, p. 485.

wash with them, are said to call forth all manner of charms and make one quite irresistible: of course I scrubbed away vigorously. Well, we returned to our hostelry, not a little tired, and had tea in the good landlady's special little snuggerly: and then a gloomy, weary walk in the dark of six or seven miles to Oxford. On the whole, I enjoyed the day very much. But, alas! we seldom taste unmingled pleasure in this world. The poor fellow who accompanied me was laid up that same night (not, I believe, through the fatigue, but from a disease which had been for some time slowly but certainly mustering its strength within); within ten days after our jolly ramble (last Wednesday) he had left us. He died in his own rooms; and you may imagine what a gloom it has thrown over us. His death was extremely sudden. Poor fellow, his life was almost a romance. He was the son of humble parents, but I believe was not on good terms with his family. However, I must not trouble you with such matters, or really a sketch of his biography would be interesting.

TO HIS SISTER MARGARET (MRS. WILLIAMSON).

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD,

*May 24, 1851.*

You will be slightly surprised, I dare say, to see the name appended to this letter. Don't faint though: there's no occasion in the world for that. The fact is that upon most mature consideration I have come to the irresistible conclusion that I must write a letter: and it's so tiresome to be always writing to the same people, and I believe I never wrote to you before,

and I hope you won't be angry, and—well, I think that will do, and my excuse is perfect. You can expect but little news from Oxford, for, notwithstanding the foolish hubbub that people make about us, we really are not fond of novelty: but here beneath our old grey walls, and by the pleasant watercourses, and underneath the shadow of ancient trees, we go quietly dreaming along, trying to nurse some healthy blossoms that may bear fruit hereafter. But this is all Greek (at least, I mean, I should think it must be so) to you, and so I must proceed to apprise you of some news which you cannot fail to appreciate. And first you must know that it's summer, and not winter; no, nor spring either; a fact of which I apprehend you may not be aware up in the North. But if you are, is it not delicious? Among the hills all kinds of weather are most blessed<sup>1</sup>. But in a low-lying place like Oxford give me summer, with all its glorious richness in sights and sounds and soft perfumes. The balmy gust from one bean-field is really almost enough to console me for the absence of those blue hills I love so much, and sometimes dream of: besides, you can always make hills out of the clouds, and to the latter phenomena we are most liberally treated in England.

But here I am rambling (I was going to say, like a goose, but I *will* say, like a strayed donkey, grazing on moors, plucking at thistles, and hee-hawing at everything), while I have twice as good news still in store. It is nothing more or less than that Will

<sup>1</sup> Pictures in the margin: 'Landing at Douglas;' 'Mr. Brown and his Spying-glass;' 'Cumnor Church, Berkshire.'

has turned up again from Calcutta. Shall you see him?

Have you heard from the I. of Man lately? I have not for three weeks! This is horrible! Really, if they are so negligent, I must cut them, I decidedly must.

TO HIS MOTHER.

Oriel College, Oxford(?),

*February 4, 1854.*

If in the midst of literary and political excitement, in the midst of scenes not directly associated with our dear lost one, I still am often bowed to the earth with the burden of so great a sorrow<sup>1</sup>, how must it be with you, immediately surrounded as you are by a thousand objects connected (how dearly, yet how agonizingly) with her memory, and unrelieved by any excitement sufficiently unassociated with her to lead your mind in another direction? My dearest mother, mine indeed is the fitful sorrow that comes and goes like shadows on the cornfields that still look forward to the harvest; yours is the drear monotony of anguish, a leaden autumn sky, when the harvest is over.

You turn your gaze ever backward, backward; while the rude demands of actual life compel you to look (but with how diminished an interest) forward; I look backward too, but when the tears come the young heart rises in its happy elasticity, and the future beckons it to bliss—bliss, bliss! Ah, how uncertain! God grant me a humble share of happiness, and I am content.

<sup>1</sup> The death of his sister Dora.

I hold that the half of sorrow is unknown till we have passed the meridian of life, and there is no future to balance the past. But there is one consideration which equalizes us again, and that is the *future* beyond all. There you have a happiness beyond expression: and there, and there only, I know full well, can I look for true and lasting happiness. In this respect, young and old, we are all one, all alike. My earthly prospects, my earthly hopes, may be all before me yet; yours may be all buried in the grave of the past: but a few years, and my hopes, my loves, will be where yours are, and we shall both be (God grant the prayer) happy in the happy, happy future, the kingdom, the mansion, the bosom of our Father. . . .

### TO HIS MOTHER.

CHRIST CHURCH,

*April 16, 1854.*

The examination is to commence to-morrow. Well, I shall do my best; and should the result prove (as in all probability it will) unfavourable, I shall not be much put out of the way; for the distinction (which is very great) and a year or two of the emoluments (which are considerable) is all I look to; and perhaps, after all, it would be better for me to strike out into the world boldly, at once, without this interval of College preferment.

I am quite surprised to hear of your so speedy removal to Douglas. I'm sorry to hear that the expense has been so great; but I think you need not

put yourself much out of the way about that. By all means make yourself easy on that score: spend what requires to be spent, and doubt not. Before this time next year, and I hope before Christmas bills come in, I shall be in a position to relieve you finally from all anxiety about money. Certainly the highest value that I set upon money, and the first aim that I propose to myself in making any, is that I may place it at your service.

This is Easter Sunday, and the writing of Latin letters, &c., made it impossible for me to write last night. I cannot consent to deny myself the pleasure of going to church this morning, and therefore I must conclude.

TO HIS MOTHER.

45 ST. ALDATE'S,

*April 23, 1854.*

I am delighted to announce the fact of my success at Oriel. On Friday, I was elected Fellow along with a man of the name of Pearson<sup>1</sup>. There were two vacancies and eleven competitors: the examination lasted four days. The glory of the thing is that to gain a Fellowship at Oriel is considered the summit of an Oxford man's ambition. The Fellows of Oriel are the picked men of the University; and this year there happened to be an unusually large number of very distinguished men in. This is none of your empty honours. It gives me an income of about £300 per ann., as long as I choose to reside at Oxford, and about £220 in cash if I reside elsewhere. In addition to this it puts me in a highly command-

<sup>1</sup> C. H. Pearson, the historian and Australian statesman.



ing position for pupils, so that on the whole I have every reason to expect that (except perhaps the first year) I shall make between £500 and £600 altogether per ann. So you see, my dear mother, that your prayers have not been unanswered, and that God will bless the generation of those who humbly strive to serve Him. You are now (it is unnecessary to say), if my life is spared, put out of the reach of all want, and, I hope, henceforth need never again give yourself a single anxious thought or care about money matters. And what a comfort this is, I'm sure I know from my own experience. I have now gained the very summit of my hopes at Oxford; and hope that I may be able to make good use of my position with a view to my future life. But my first thought was and is of you, and the pride which (though I say it) you may reasonably take in my success. . . . I hope you will accept the Oriel Fellowship as a proof that your son has not *as yet* lived quite in vain.

Best love to the girls. I hope they like Douglas. . . . I have not omitted to remark that the election took place on April 21, the anniversary of your birth and marriage.

TO HIS MOTHER.

ORIEL COLLEGE,

*November 5, 1854.*

Your account of poor little H. quite confirms the impression which I had of his state when I last saw him. I had no doubt that there was something serious the matter with the poor little fellow. For my

own part, I have such confidence in these impressions that I do not feel any hope of his recovery. There is a certain look about the eye, a strange dreamy, unearthly look, a kind of stereotyped interrogation, a wonder and an awe which to me are infallible signs of the approach of Death. It was so with poor — : and I could not help feeling just the same almost as I did when I first came home from C.-town this time eight years ago, and found that all familiarity of intercourse was over between us, and felt that he was consecrated to higher destinies, and that there was a visible mark of separation in that fixed and strong look : something that bid me stand back, and look with reverence upon the change. I know it well, I should recognize that feeling under any circumstances. And you can't conceive how it pained me the other day to find that I was compelled as it were, whether I willed it or not, to recognize this awful mystery.

The poor dear little fellow looked *so* weary, and yet *so* uncomplaining, except so far as there was that same mute interrogation in his eye as though he wanted to ask us all something, God only knows what, poor darling ! To all my caresses he returned nothing but the same look of speechless questioning ; and it went to my heart like a dagger.

The poor little fellow looked so good too : really there was a kind of dignity and calmness in his every motion (never free though from that awe-struck reverence), which seemed to proceed from a kind of half-born consciousness of what was coming upon him. I thought it better not to distress the

family just then by any ill-timed surmises : but I have seldom in my life felt a keener pang ; and you will scarcely believe me that even now as I write the tears blind my eyes. Poor little darling child ! he has opened an old fountain ; I scarcely thought it could have flowed for him : but these little things unconsciously, and by insensible degrees, twine themselves around our hearts ; and I had no idea till now that this little boy was so dear to me as he is. I can scarcely bear to think of him now that he has ‘put down his little head,’ as H. describes it. But the subject is inexpressibly painful to me ; I must leave it <sup>1</sup>.

### TO HIS MOTHER.

PARLIAMENT STREET, RAMSEY, ISLE OF MAN,

*June 20, 1862.*

You can hardly believe how absolutely barren and desolate the island appears to me coming from Gloucestershire. The farming looks just like a mere slight scratching on the surface, and as for the trees and hedges they look like unfledged starveling birds. I confess I never felt before the immense difference between our bare little island and the rich luxuriance of English vegetation, at least West of England vegetation. . . . K. told me such a capital story of —. Preaching upon the text, ‘Demas hath forsaken me,’

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the three letters that follow there is a gap of nearly twenty years, which the relatives and friends known to me have been unable to fill up. [Brown once said to a friend—‘For many years—I don’t know how many—I gave myself up to domestic life and read and wrote practically nothing.’]

and trying to extemporize, he apostrophized an imaginary Demas, and exclaimed, 'Aw! Demas man! Demas man! what did ye do yandhar for?' . . . A. has borne all her fatigues well, and Baby famously. . . . She is beginning to enjoy herself. The sea is to her, and indeed to *me*, a source of endless delight.

### TO HIS MOTHER.

(GLOUCESTER?)

September 21, 1862.

The Festival was a great treat. We enjoyed the Oratorio very much; we had excellent places, and could both see and hear to advantage. It was my favourite, the *Elijah*. . . . When H. and A. were in London, we had a geological excursion in the Dean Forest. The day was glorious: we got some specimens, and partially disinterred a very extraordinary skull, the teeth of which — has taken to Cambridge. . . . Then we rambled out of the forest on to a common high up in the hills, where I had the inexpressible delight of lying down on a bed of heather in full bloom (!!!!), with harebells and even gorse close by. This was the crowning triumph. — was 'visibly affected,' as I told him; for he loves the I. of Man and the nature of its scenery. I only wish I had gone there earlier in the day, and by myself! What a treat it would have been, what inward communing, what memories, what dead hopes and fears, leaves that have faded from my tree of life!! And over all was the bright sky, blue as the harebell itself, and bluer; and, as it always is, circumscribing all our littleness of life, larger and better

than it. Moreover I ate some blackberries : but they were poor and flavourless compared with the Manx ones.

And this reminds me that to-day we have had a mulberry pudding off our own tree. We thought to compare it with a blackberry one ; but wae's me ! what a difference ! We all agreed that it was immensely inferior to our old friend. . . . Baby is becoming a songstress ; perhaps the Festival has shed some occult influence upon her. . . . Your description of the view from Douglas Head makes my mouth water. Glorious, indeed, it must be now. Love to M.

TO THE REV. E. W. KISSACK.

(GLOUCESTER ?)

*September 24, 1862.*

Forget and forgive  
As long as you live.

The discrepancy between the dates of our respective letters is something frightful. I can only trust, &c., &c.

I fear I cannot subscribe to your organ. And I will candidly tell you the reason. Your list of subscribers is really not the thing. Let the parish come out first as it ought to do, and then outsiders may be called on. But I think, from what I can see, that interesting crisis has not yet come. And now you will probably say I am a hypocrite of the most crocodilian stamp if I wish you every success in the undertaking. But remember I am ready to undergo any moderate amount of phlebotomy, provided that I can first see such an effort on the part of the parishioners as would indicate an effectual demand.

Is the Archdeacon at home? If so, will you present to him my kind remembrances. A young lady in Ramsey has just sent me his *carte de visite*. I fancy it is by Myers: it is very fair, and represents the archdeacon just as he must have looked after running across from the Mitre, whip in hand.

TO MRS. WILLIAMSON.

4 ST. JOHN'S TERRACE, KESWICK,

September 16, 1873.

I went to Scotland but not to Shetland. At St. Andrews I found the people had given P. such a dismal picture of what was likely to be in store for us in the Shetlands that he had lost all heart about it. A long course of St. Andrews' golf seemed to have made his enterprise droop rather.

However, we determined to go to the Highlands for a week or ten days.

What we wanted to do was to make for Aviemore Station on the Highland Railway (Strathspey); this is visible in some sort from the top of the mountain, say twelve or fifteen miles off; but, of course, not to us. We made a dive down a steep slope. We got into a perfect pit of a corrie, a concentration of corries. But we had hit it very fairly. We were between Ben MacDhui and Cairn Toul: a little below the Wells of Dee. The deuce of this Cairngorm range is that the mountains are separated from one another by such infernal abysses. I had no idea of this. If you look at a map you would fancy it would be an easy matter passing from one to another:

but each of these transitions is a veritable *descensus ad inferos*, and the *resurrectio*, oh, the weary *resurrectio* ! Just about the Wells of Dee (sources of that jolly river) is the pass, or at least the watershed between the Dee and the Spey valleys. It is the roughest pass I was ever in ; the walking, or rather hopping, skipping, and jumping, utterly ruinous to one's temper. The rain came down—well, you know how—and the track was simply no track at all. I don't know by what combination of blundering, and conjecture, and divination, and audacity, we hit it. As far as it existed at all, it was a thin line of plashy, pasty peat, through heather, cranberry, bilberry, beastliness. In fact, it did not exist.

However, we came at last to a forest road. Here the country was delicious—Rothiemurchus heather such as it would seem impudent to picture to oneself, except in dreams ; rainbows, and fragments of rainbows—here, there, and everywhere. Sometimes just one ruby bit making the heather burn into an intensity as of pain ; then the whole big arch spanning the valley. Very good : but here we had to ford a river, the Morlich. So behold these two venerable presbyters, with their trousers tucked up high on their poor pale thighs, stumbling over the stones of Morlich, with knapsack on back, and a rueful air of parodying our stalwart-legged breechless brethren. Here at last, yes here, in this all but indecent state, we encountered two natives—an old man and a young woman. Charming Highlanders ! How good they are ! How truly polite ! Not a smile ; or, if so, so kindly, so sweetly tempered with gracious considera-



tion for the forlorn and, I should say, apparently idiotic pair who stood before them.

The girl spoke English, and acted as interpreter for us with her Gaelic-speaking father. I spread myself all out to look manly and brawny—it was as a glazier spreadeth the putty with his knife—as the thrifty matron spreadeth the sparse butter with her thumb on the bannock of expectant infancy.

At last I felt it would not do. I collapsed, drooped, looked feebly poetical, and asked old Donald to accept of a little well-meant tobacco. On the whole this last act had some little flavour of manliness in it, and I felt encouraged; as we moved on, I almost *strode*. We came on the Spey at the Boat-house, as it is called; nor is it a public-house; that is, it has no licence. But a girl of some twenty-three years keeps it, and gives you tea. She lives alone! bless her! and cursed eternally be he that would make it unsafe for her thus to live! What a tea she gave us! and what comfort and quiet and gentleness and peace altogether! But this will never do! I must leave off this maundering. You may suppose us therefore to be still at the Boat-house. As God liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I wish we were for ever and ever.

My kind love to Mamma and John.

TO MRS. WILLIAMSON.

CLIFTON,

October 18, 1874.

Our three weeks in Switzerland were consummate. No rain, no wind, a perpetual bath of sunshine, hot of

course, but at those heights deliciously bracing and stimulating; sunshine that got into your brain and heart, and set you all aglow with a sweet radiant fire I never thought possible for my old jaded *apparatus physicus*. We went by Paris to Neufchatel; thence to Berne, Thun, Interlaken, Lauterbrunnen, Mürren. Here we stayed a week. It was the best part of our holiday; a week never, *never* to be forgotten.

Mürren faces the Jungfrau. This glorious creature is your one object of interest from morning to night. It seems so near that you could fancy a stone might be thrown across to it. Between you and it is a broad valley: but so deep, and with sides so precipitous, that it is entirely out of sight. So the Jungfrau *vis-à-vis*-es you frankly through the bright sweet intervening air. And then she has such moods; such unutterable smiles, such inscrutable sulks, such growls of rage suppressed, such thunder of avalanches, such crowns of stars. One evening our sunset was the real rose-pink you have heard of so much. It fades, you know, into a deathlike chalk-white. That is the most *awful* thing. A sort of spasm seems to come over her face, and in an instant she is a corpse, rigid, and oh so cold! Well, so she died, and you felt as if a great soul had ebbed away into the Heaven of Heavens: and thankful, but very sad, I went up to my room. I was reading by candle-light, for it gets dark immediately after sunset, when A. shrieked to me to come to the window. What a Resurrection—so gentle, so tender—like that sonnet of Milton's about his dead wife returning in vision! The moon had risen; and there was the Jungfrau—oh chaste, oh blessed saint

in glory everlasting! Then all the elemental spirits that haunt crevasses, and hover around peaks, all the patient powers that bear up the rock buttresses, and labour to sustain great slopes, all streams, and drifts, and flowers, and vapours, made a symphony, a time most solemn and rapturous. It was there, unheard perhaps, unheard, I will not deny it; but there, nevertheless. A young Swiss felt it, and with exquisite delicacy feeling his way, as it were, to some expression, however inadequate, he played a sonata of Schumann, and one or two of the songs, such as the *Frühlingsnacht*. Forgive my rhapsody: but, you know, you don't get those things twice. And let me say just one word of what followed. The abyss below was a pot of boiling blackness, and on to this, and down into this, and all over this, the moonlight fell as meal falls on to porridge from nimbly sifting fingers. Moon-meal! that was it.

I climbed the Schilthorn one day before breakfast; it is about 10,000 feet; but, as a rule, I didn't like to leave A. alone; so that my climbing was of the most limited, and I scarcely got on to ice at all. At Mürren, perhaps more than anywhere else, we had the most astounding richness of pasture. But Switzerland, generally, is in this respect unique. So lush is the vegetation that it is almost impossible to get up into bare savagery of desolation.

The sweet bright Flora baffles you; she springs like a bacchante from height to height. You can't get above her. I don't mean fat, fulsome richness; but the pastures are so velvety, so parsemèd with all imaginable colours. The grass seems to be all flowers,

and the flowers to be all grass: the closest-grained math I ever beheld; and through it everywhere, led by careful hands, go singing, hissing rather, like sharp silver scythes, the little blessed streams. I was not prepared for this.

We got to Chamounix and went up the Flégère, and A. was like a roe upon the mountains; and every care and every strain of anxiety and bother was wiped from off our souls, and we were both, as we once were, young and full of hope and love. Age and the love shall remain, God wot, but the other things—all right! all right! No language can give you any idea how all this enjoyment acted on A.; and over and over I thought, and every day I still think, what a *bain de vie* this would be for you. It did far more for her than for me. In Clifton she gets more depressed, compressed, suppressed, than I do; but in Switzerland the very *geist* of the hills got into her, and expanded her heart, and every vital power, till she veritably bloomed; and she was *so* happy.

From Geneva we made a pretty straight course home. We stayed a night at Dijon, and another night in Paris; the next we slept at Charing Cross: and the next at Pensarn. So fades from my view, but not from my heart, the richest page on which my poor halting life must be written. . . .

. . . I hope Mamma is able to enjoy some happiness still. Will this letter amuse her, do you think? . . . I do so long to cheer and comfort her: but I am sadly awkward about it. Give her my very best love; and tell her, how every highest thought with which God is pleased to bless me seems to come from Him to me

through her. Not in vain am I her son ; I feel sure of that. And, believe me, this is no conceit : one can't help feeling what one feels : and if I do feel a strict and native companionship with the mountains of either world, I will not deny it, and I will claim it as inherited from her.

Kind love to J., the good and ever blessed.

TO MRS. WILLIAMSON.

LIBRARY READING ROOM, CLIFTON COLLEGE,

*December 25, 1875.*

The blessings of this fair Christmas-tide be on you and your 'gude man' ! It is a most lovely morning. I am sitting in the College Library, in a deep oriel. The Close, Chapel, &c., are bathed in the sweetest sunshine, it is quite tepid, and the air is so still. Only indeed some blackbirds in the gardens are 'shoutin', and no wonder—the 'craythurs.' This silence and solitude are to me absolute food, especially after all the row and worry at the end of Term.

The Headmasters held their Conference here immediately after our Breaking-up. And now the last rumble of their chariot-wheels has died away, Eastward, and there is not a soul about, and the sunshine is not embarrassed by having to make shadows for any strange bodies, and all is clear, luminous, delicious, universal intelligence. It floats and buoys me up all round. 'My mind to me a kingdom is,' or rather a four-post bedstead of gentlest solace. And surely this sweet blue air is the very life of the intellect. All storms, and individuals, and rapprochements, and

relations, and permutations, and combinations seem to me now brutal and destructive, wasteful and deadly. That a blackbird should pipe may well be borne, and I swear to you (imagine some ethereal bird-of-paradise oath!) that there is nothing else. The sky is hung over this place by a most delicate diamond boss at the zenith, and believe me! it all swims in silent blue music. (I saw a sheep then, but never mind!) Where are the men and women? Well, now look here, you'll not mention it again. They're all in church. See how good God is! See how he has placed these leitourgic traps in which people, especially disagreeable people, get caught—and lo! the universe for me!!! me—me. . . .

Bless you all everywhere that love me. It is 11.45 a.m. A rook has just flown past. As he did so, he cawed. From his black wings dripped the almost clinging blue.

TO J. R. MOZLEY.

CLIFTON COLLEGE,

*March 26, 1876.*

I think there is every likelihood that I shall look you up. But if not, why can't you come to us (Windermere)? Yes—have a walk with me up Fairfield. Ha! have I found you?

'The Doctor' is still in the long-clothes of MS., and most likely will never be short-coated. It is enough: he has been born: the gossips have come and looked at him, and said—What a remarkable child! how like his father! What more would you

have? A *joke*! . . . Bless that baby of yours. *You* ought to play the piano for him, too. I had so severely arranged all my spring affinities, sympathies, symphonies, or whatever they are, that this weather has completely knocked me to pieces; not in body, however, which is sufficient, and plods on steadily.

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

LYNTON COTTAGE, LYNTON,

*April 16, 1877.*

It is so cold. Can it possibly be like this with you? We have one colour: it is grey, the grey of an old man's beard, stubbly and unwashen.

But there is roaring of winds and streams.

Last night I had a ramble which it would be hard to describe. I went round and round something; probably myself. One point there was upon the circumference—a spark—a ship working her way up channel against wind and tide. The ship was invisible in the gloom, but the light—what intense yearning! and what pluck and energy too!

It was like a red diamond, if there be such a thing, boring into blackness. I could almost hear the rip-rip of the severing sheets of darkness; or perhaps, rather, a delicate hum of the gritty grating stuff through which she had to pass.

But no, I return to the first idea. The borer, the red diamond piercing the black marble. Ah well—what matter!

Write to me, and tell me about Rubinstein. Now do! do!



I enclose some verses, which are silly enough ; but I couldn't help writing them.

TO J. R. MOZLEY.

CLIFTON,

January 6, 1878.

*Politics* move me not. There is nothing architectonic in this science, from my point of view. I couldn't help laughing at a passage in Sismondi I happened to be reading just when your letter arrived. 'Man is the product of laws and institutions,' and so forth. What absolute rot! The political function does not require genius, or any brilliancy even ; nay, it is better to have it entirely dissociated from all such lure. Derby and Carnarvon would steer us through this strait infinitely better if that old virtuoso were not upon the bridge—blow him! We only want a certain material fence drawn round the garden of our life. We can't waste anything very precious or beautiful upon such a vallum. Pitch honest stakes, and let stout ditchers delve. The genius is wanted for other purposes.

TO MISS CANNAN.

CLIFTON,

May 16, 1878.

I have to thank you for a great treat. The *Autobiography* is quite incomparable. What a bright old desperado! she holds her atheistic bayonet to your throat with such cheerful energy. The style is most refreshing. . . .

I confess I am very curious to see Mrs. Chapman's book. This stout-hearted woman (Martineau) lay down with a sort of grim satisfaction, to die, at the age of fifty-one; and didn't she live quite twenty years afterwards? I will hazard the observation that her longevity may have been favoured by her supreme self-complacency.

Also, is she not a little cool (coarse? vulgar?) in the way she talks about 'Old Wordsworth'? Mind, I can stand her contempt for parsons, and all that—it doesn't ruffle my feathers in the least. But I do feel that with Wordsworth we are upon sacred ground. I am all the more bothered because Miss Martineau was not a Philistine by any means, and she makes every now and then extraordinary good hits as to what constitutes true poetry.

TO MISS CANNAN.

CLIFTON COLLEGE,

July 14, 1878.

Thank you for the *Manse Garden*. I am going right through it; though he keeps me a long time waiting at the holly hedge. It is very pleasant reading. I think I almost prefer the glimpses he gives us of possible tatterdemalionism and easy-going out-of-elbowness in a Scotch Manse. I fancy I can see those dry dust-heaps where the hens wash themselves in a kind of earth-born snuff.

We had much ado to get anything out of our garden. It was a regular fight against unfavourable

circumstances, very heart-breaking at the time, I believe ; but amusing enough to look back upon. . . .

You will, I dare say, let me tarry a little longer in the precincts of the Manse. I have not yet seen inside of the holly.

TO J. E. PEARSON.

PENSARN,

*September 16, 1878.*

Many thanks for your letter. With such letters the mill-stream of our lives should be studded as with water-lilies.

It is not a letter in truth so much as a sonnet. Also it is ('for example') a little overture—most refreshing—and just what people ought to make haste to write to each other.

I would not have it transposed into the key of verse. But it makes me ponder. Do you write verse? I have, somewhere far back in my susceptorium (if there be such an organ or receptacle), an idea that you possibly meant your very sweet description as a most gentle and loving gird at my mountain truculence. I know, I know—indeed I also long for peace and 'straight-backed cows,' and 'swallows round the towers.' And whenever you see these things very clearly do write to me at once. Of such amours I am a greedy but safe confidant. On Thursday we shall be in Clifton. I delight in Wales more than ever. But for England there is very much to be said.

TO J. E. PEARSON.

LAKE VIEW, KESWICK,

*September 15, 1879.*

Again I receive your holiday pictures, and thank you heartily for the pleasant triptych. How shall I make return? I have been in Yorkshire—no, Durham; my first picture may be—at Appleby.

I was with Atkinson: we were climbing up from the town to the station, when suddenly far above us, on a high bank against the sky-line, was P., a solemn and almost awful figure and face, not melancholy, but stern and hard, far reach of eye, the pose of memories and back-seeking. His old school lay beneath his feet, his old church, his old river, his old self.

My second picture must be Caldron Snout, in Teesdale, seen by us in the late twilight, a joyous rush of flaming cream, sheets and volumes of that fire you get by rubbing together two pieces of quartz—a bridge (wooden, precarious) spans the fall midway. We look up to the comby crest where it first gets a notion of what is before it; under us is the straight arrowy myriad-lined thrust of the absolute energy, full of hate and insane purpose. We climb a bit of rock, and above the fall we see grey and melancholy preparations, a long dim claymore riveted into a background of hills; the hills black with a lustrous blackness as of Hamburg grapes; beyond all a blue-white sky, almost intolerably clear.

The colours grey, blue, white, cream, black. In the south, just resting on the high level of a moor,

Jupiter ; in the east, sinister and dim, Saturn and Mars. All the land very high, everything held up as if upon some giant's palm for heaven to look upon—a consciousness of being above everything. A perfect solitude, no roads, no paths, no trace or sign of human habitation. A half-acknowledged difficulty of ever getting away, ever getting back to the homely ways and haunts of men. On one side of me, P., quite silent and looking up ; on the other, M., pale, unearthly, his face seamed with deep lines of violet, looking into mine, and asking me whether I am satisfied. His childish glee when I tell him I am, and yet the unabated hunger for sympathy, and again and again the question, and again and again the answer, until at last he looked radiant with gratitude and triumph. And then, will *you* not believe it, Pearson ? the rush into my eyes of tears that I suppose I succeeded in hiding.

We saw High Force next day, but, as M. had fore-known, with all its greatness, it could not be accepted by us in lieu of Caldron.

My third picture (ah, vines ! apricots ! sunny parsondom ! no—not *you* ! not *you* ! but) a thunder-storm in our mountains here. B. and I had gone up Hindscarth, and were now on Dale-head, a good stony hill up Newland's way confronting Honister. It came from Scawfell. I saw it there a deep blue, or rather a gunpowder black. With two clips of its broad wings it was upon us ; and we ran—ran before it—ran down to get shelter among the crags, for our Dale-head was as bare as a billiard ball. We had hardly time to dispossess a poor sheep

of its niche (it might have stayed, however, if it had so chosen), when it swept over us in a splendid rush of rain, hail, and lightning. It had no time to stop and search for such atomies as we, but with one great wrench and a mighty fling it rattled down into Borrowdale eastward; then sunshine and a blue sky with that blessed wistful look as who should say—‘Were you frightened?’ And then a descent to a quarry, where two cheerful men were cutting slates, and were so glad to see us. I dare say you know the curious numbness and pricking of the fingers when you are caught in a real thunder-cloud, and are all but breathing electricity. I fear you will be disappointed with my three pictures; but I thought I would try and give you back some portion of the pleasure you have given me.

Let us exchange these sketches every summer, as long as we adhere to this not-after-all-so-much-to-be-condemned-and-deprecated old scene of existence.

TO MRS. FLETCHER.

CLIFTON,

*October 19, 1879.*

Though personally unknown to you, I feel I must write to you in your great sorrow. Such sorrow seems to cry from the depths of its unutterable intensity to all hearts that have felt and can feel what sorrow is. Such sorrow makes all true men your brothers, and I for one would fain try and comfort you a little.

And yet how hard it is to say anything that will comfort you! I can only stand by your side, and speechlessly pray for you, and sympathize with you. It is dark indeed! oh for light! for the light. Dear friend, how I have prayed for this in my own case! that God would come into my heart, and shed, if not a bright convincing joy, at least some soft sweet soothing twilight of His love in which I could rest. May He give you this, and make you feel that all is well! For assuredly all is so. I knew your little girl: I once took a number of young things (I scarcely remember any of them now but her) in a boat in Ramsey Bay. I thought her very lovable, and in every way promising and delightful. And we chatted and laughed, as you may well imagine—bright sky, merry hearts, all hope and radiance! I don't think I ever saw her again. And, indeed, this would be but a slight ground for asking to be permitted to associate myself to your grief, vividly as it remains pictured on my memory. But I knew your late husband very well, and we must have many common interests and friends. It is, however, as one who has suffered that I venture to address you now. This seems to be the strongest of all ties, or nearly so. My heart bleeds for you, for are you not my sister in the sacred bonds of sorrow? I pray God to bless you. Some little relief may come from human comforters; but it was He that made our poor struggling hearts, and He alone can strengthen and sustain them.



TO J. E. PEARSON.

CHAPEL,

*December 21, 1879.*

Again I see you, Pearson, like a bird  
Flushed from Devonian furrows, where they lie  
And front the concaves of another sky,  
And scent the nearer Spring. Ah, say a word!  
Say two, dear Pearson! surely we have heard  
Enough of 'moral, spiritual' powers,  
'In a society like ours'—  
The pulpit, Pearson! not the pew—  
Assume the concionatic perch:  
Ah, tell us how they coo—  
he pigeons of the Exe,  
What foam-bird flecks  
The channel's waste, what tridents search,  
Keen-pronged, the Daulian caves,  
And all the bicker of the waves—  
Ah, tell us, do!  
Do, Pearson: nor not tell  
How fares the younger birch—  
Is Eddard Harris well  
As well can be—  
And of his consort tell me—how is she?

TO J. R. MOZLEY.

CLIFTON,

*October 24, 1880.*

If I might see what you have written, by way of memorial, I would be grateful: but I hardly know whether I ought to ask you this. You can judge; and you will judge according to the law of kindness and sympathy. Perhaps we ought to shut out no

honest spirit that wants to feel with us even in our deepest sorrows.

<sup>1</sup>Concerning those loved ones—whether any communication with them now is possible, whether we shall hereafter know them, or ‘have anything to do with them,’ all this is to me the merest mist. I did not like to say so before, for I thought it would distress you. But as you almost ask me, I have to tell you now that I know nothing about ‘a disembodied state’; that to me it is altogether removed from the sphere of practical considerations. To say I recognize the wisdom of God, and His goodness in all, is to say what may be said, but it seems useless to say it. I simply know nothing: I submit, I acquiesce even; but that is all. That we cannot have pleasure without pain, for instance, is, in a rueful sort of way, true enough; but is it not an unhappy arrangement? and is it to go on after death? or is that supreme pain to be final? And if Heaven, or whatever we call it, is to be free from pain, why should not earth be so? and so on, and so on, . . . but I don’t mean these for arguments—no—no. I lie down on my child’s grave<sup>2</sup> and fill my mouth with the clay, and say nothing. If I may quote my own lines—

Oh! what is there to do?

Oh! what is there to say?

‘Nothing’—nothing whatever. But then, dear Mozley, do not think that I do not react under the stroke: I am not merely passive. *This is my action.* Death teaches me to *act thus*—to cling with tenfold

<sup>1</sup> On this subject cf. the letter of May 23, 1888.

<sup>2</sup> His boy Braddon died in April, 1876. How this blow shook him his poetry has told; see the poem called ‘Aber Stations’ in the volume entitled *Old John*, p. 23.

tenacity to those that remain. A man might, indeed, argue thus. The pain of separation from those we love is so intense that I will *not love*, or, at least, I will withdraw myself into a delicate suspension of bias, so that when the time comes I may not feel the pang, or hardly feel it. This would be the *economical* view, and a sufficiently base one. But I am taught by death to run the fullest flood into my family relations. The ground is this. *He* is gone: I have no certain ground whatever for expecting that that relation can be renewed. Therefore, I am thankful that I actualized it intensely, ardently, and effectually, while it existed: and now I will do the same for what is left to me: nay, I will do much more; for I did not *do enough*. He and I might have been more intertwined, a great deal more, and that we were not appears to me now a great loss. In this, as in everything else, I accept the words of the Ecclesiast—‘What thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for’—you know the rest. I accept that too. This is the very outcome: often I am otherwise, but this is the pivot of oscillation, and it is a practical one—we trust, or, at any rate, lean too much to the mere *storgē*; *effort is needed and intention*.

Yes, it is quite true about the ‘Lamb’<sup>1</sup>: there he lay, upon the very spot the child’s feet had rested on, when he tried to climb. Here, too, is another fact, but I have put it into rhyme<sup>2</sup>.

Ah, Mozley, Mozley!

<sup>1</sup> See *Old John*, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> In ‘Clevedon Verses’ in *Old John*, p. 84, here written down:

And so unto the turf her ear she laid,  
To hark if still in that dark place he played.

## TO MISS CANNAN.

CLIFTON,

February 8, 1881.

And 'True Thomas' is gone. What has he not been to the men of my generation? And the younger men come and ask one—What was it? What did he teach? and so forth; and, of course, there is nothing to be said in that direction. And, if one mumbles something between one's teeth (impatiently, rather like a half-chewed curse)—something about a *Baptism of fire*—my graceful adolescents look shocked, and, for the most part, repeat the question, 'Yes, yes, but what did he teach?' To which (I mean when *repeated*) there is no possible reply, but the honest outspoken 'D——.' My favourite Carlyle is *The Life of John Sterling*. . . .

## TO G. H. WOLLASTON.

1 BEACH COTTAGE, SEATON, DEVON,

April 23, 1881.

Judge of Seaton as a *municipium* from the fact that your letter got here on Tuesday last, and has only been delivered to-day! Shall I kick up a row? Shall I write to Bob Fawcett? No, I think not: in more vigorous days (*calida juventa*) I should probably have spilled some gall over it; but I feel very much propitiated, very much 'subdooed,' not unlike that dear old cook in *Punch* who told her mistress that she was 'of that 'appy disposition that she felt she could love *any* man.'

Our beach is the most sparkling one I ever saw. It is chiefly composed of fine shingle—flint is the great thing, but such flint, exquisitely coloured, and with such a dewy gleam always on it. Even the dry stuff, above high-water mark, is never dull or dim, it seems to have a radiance in itself—bless it! Country inland decidedly dull, except for primroses, but primroses, I am ashamed to say, one now begins to postulate: too bad! for after all, what is like them? Chalk, chalk, chalk—that is the coast, and such coasts have, to me, always a blank and idiot look. The cliffs seem to have no intelligent appreciation of where they are, or what is expected of them; the very sea has got tired of buffeting their poor pasty fronts—no struggle, no defiance, no grim repose, ‘no nothink.’ Water very good for these parts, clear and without suspect. Still, I should not think of coming here in the long holidays: the place is crammed, I believe, in August; and interior being deficient, no outlet that way, I should be miserable.

The great ‘broodin’ fact’ at present for me is the chance of my taking my grace-term<sup>1</sup> in the autumn, and going with P. I think that would set me up.

It would be a queer contrast: Dakyns eastward, I westward; Dakyns in ‘Ελλάς, I in Yankee doodle-dom; Childe Dakyns, Squire Brown. *You* come too: do! The one disadvantage about our adventure would be the desperate difficulty of settling down to school-mastering again, of which—good sooth—I weary more and more, and would fain see some other outlet, some Zoar,—but not in Colorado—at

<sup>1</sup> Leave of absence for a term.

least, I suppose not: it is too late for me to take to bowie knives and revolvers; the trick ought to be taught in childhood, for they are devilishly nimble with their index-finger—those gentlemen in Denver county.

TO G. H. WOLLASTON.

*À mon ami G. H. W.*

*Juin 25, 1881.*

Evolène! Evolène!

Ah le bon

Wollaston —

Soit béni

Son nom,

Son lit,

Sa reine

Constance

(Pas de France)

Qui me mène

À Evolène, à Evolène,

C'est ma faute

A moi —

Pourquoi

Primesaute

Depuis trois

Semaines,

Ne suis-j' ici,

Ainsi,

Sans gêne

À Evolène, à Evolène?

Hier soir  
C'était noir ;  
Nues d'ébène  
Firent tonnerres,  
Les éclairs  
Chassèrent  
Mon carrosse  
Et mon 'oss,'  
Comme j'enfuis  
Par la pluie —  
Oui, oui,  
Grand' peine —  
You bet !  
Rather wet  
Bis wir sehen  
Evolène, Evolène.  
A Glion  
Le Lion  
Britannique  
Et sa clique  
Très-niaise ;  
'Swell' Anglais  
Très-niais  
Doux ministre  
S—— cuistre ;  
Allemand,  
Cad in grain,  
Français,  
Pseudo-gai.  
Tout le 'lot,'  
Grand 'rot,'  
Mûrent ma haine ;



Et je vins,  
'Slap bang,'  
À Evolène, à Evolène.  
Evolène! Evolène!  
Ce n'est pas—  
Hélas!  
Pays d'or,  
Ni pays du dollar;  
C'est le pays du grand Arolla(r),  
Mais le crime  
D'une telle rime  
Fait horreur,  
Des conséquences,  
Je me lance  
Dans silence.  
Souscrit  
T. B.

TO G. H. WOLLASTON.

HOTEL BEL ALP,

July 5, 1881.

This is the place! I have seen nothing to compare with it for a moment. It blends with all my humours, and mentally it makes me quite absolute. . . .

One ice cave had an altar inside, and round the altar, and far away into the inner depths, was a sea of the purest water. The purity of that altar! It seemed to have inside it a fiery globule that shifted and *clucked* (do you understand?).

Tyndall is here: last night he sat out with a lot of us, as we took our post-prandial coffee and what not.

He talked well, and seemed to enjoy it. I like what I have seen of him. He is quite unaffected, so much so as not to mind flinging out, every now and then, dashes of real Hibernian rhetoric. . . .

The wavy look of the glacier gives one an irresistible impression of up and down motion as of the sea, and I could have sworn that F. & Co. were rising and falling on big, heavy, long rollers. I told him afterwards he looked like Moses leading the children of Israel through the Red Sea, the water being a wall on this side and on that. The comparison failed a little in the personality—that was all. Addio.

TO H. R. KING.

LAKE VIEW, KESWICK,

September 14, 1881.

Many thanks for the Wordsworth. I have read Mat's Preface. I can't say I am satisfied with it, though I am very much amused. I see in Crabb Robinson's *Diary* that he thought it necessary to recommend a certain order of reading Wordsworth; I rather think that he deemed it advisable to postpone the reading of some of the poems till the Greek Kalends. And he was a 'Wordsworthian.' Probably, therefore, Mat is right in principle, but he is certainly arbitrary in the application thereof. He has retained some poems—such as that on Burns—evidently for the sake of a few lines or stanzas, not for the excellency of the composition as a whole. On the other hand, he has omitted entire poems ('The Cuckoo'?) of the greatest merit.

We have just had our last row on the lake. We left it jet, and steel, and gold. How sad it is! I can't affect to be otherwise than wretched. I do believe your autumns are the very soul of the lake year; and I am always forced to go away, just as the intensity of the sweetness begins to deepen to its acme. But—we must be patient, and thankful for what we have had.

I was at Grasmere on Tuesday, and had a row on the lake, also a long and loving dream over the grave. That church beck! the little scamp—how does it contrive to check its pace, and hush its prattle, and lean its little elbow against the wall, and creep beneath the bridge, and then hurry-scurry away for the lake? and what a colour!

It was very good of you both to come and see me, especially in my dull and sodden estate.

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

CLIFTON,

June 4, 1882.

To think that we should have a chance of getting you to Keswick, or somewhere near! Directly I got your first letter, I began seething with this notion, so did Wollaston. Our plan was that you should be at Patterdale, Wollaston at Grasmere, and I at Keswick. We set on foot inquiries. At present we stand thus: W. *will* be at Grasmere, I *will* be at Keswick, all settled, signed and sealed. But where *will* you be? 'Ah!' say you, 'it is not a question of will,' and you go on doubtless to quote Scripture, and Greek tragedians, and Evangelical hymnologists, as usual, 'Oh, where

shall rest be found?' . . . Rest *shall* be found. Come to the Lakes! do make up your dear old mind about that! make it up, and lock it up, and sit upon it, corded and water-tight. There will be no difficulty whatever. Just go to Keswick to-morrow. After all that's better than Patterdale. Keswick itself, the town, is a very blessed old place. There is no promenade, no regulation turn-out place at all; and really, considering the number of visitors, it is surprising how little one sees of them, whereas of genuine country folk one sees a great deal. Keswick market-day (Saturday) is a most refreshing sight. The pathos of the posies (excuse the alliteration) is perfectly thrilling—the simple old cottage garden flowers so trustfully offered you as good and sufficient. But the fact is, I love the place; and whether it is bracing or not I don't care, I'd rather die in its sweet soft arms, than live an eternity of Tithono-Strudbrug effeteness at a place like Whitby.

Concerning Oxford I have not much to say: it is decidedly a good offer, and not to be sneezed at for a moment (would you like to sneeze at it—just a moment? eh? what? . . . tchew!! there! now . . . all right). But my selfishness would make me an unfair judge. Against the Bodleian I would put the Great Gable, against New College Gardens those 'Fraternal four at Borrowdale,' against all the Thameses in the universe one sparkling emerald of the Greta. Have you the *furore* of books strong? I am rather sorry. I am beginning to think it would have been much better for the world if no books had ever been written—scrawling scribbles on the walls of the eternal silence

—ah, blast them! What sap of life have they not wrung and baked and cheese-pressed out of me! Still I see a plan which is only too obvious, and which would, if you adopted it, dash all my hopes: it is of course this—to go to the Lakes from June to August, while things are decidedly cheap there, and in August move to Oxford. The place is then very sweet and soothing—a long-drawn breath of ease, or even a suspension, a dear old mother sleeping while her children play in divers fields. Hold hard! I am beginning to fall in love with the notion myself. Ah, no! come to Keswick, and stay there! and let us gather the Skiddaw blaberries, and be happy.

Hitherto, we have all (except perhaps myself?) treated Skiddaw in a somewhat flippant fashion. It is such an obvious hill, with a town and a railway station at its foot, and a regulated footpath and a drinking-fountain, and a refreshment hut, as you go up; but it has inner chambers: it is mystic, and *remotis rupibus*, I have heard Bacchus teaching, and the *nymphas discentes*, and far beyond them and the prick-ears of the Capripedes, I have seen my purple island, my Hesperid, my *only true home on this earth*. And if you would go there with me! Why not? I shall in any case be going. Would not that be sacramental?

TO G. H. WOLLASTON.

LAKE VIEW, KESWICK,

July 30, 1882.

Peace! that is the word—and soaking, that is the other word. Ah, well,—never mind! Friday and

Saturday were glorious. To-day it rains, and such a blessed muddle of hay and cows, and sheep, and lake and mist—I was going to say you never saw, but verily you have, and often, if not too often. But does it not soothe? Tell me that! Is it not sweet? Does it not fill up all the crannies of the soul as with a soft honey-cement? Go to! no sea! and only the delicate mica-film of Mona away there in the west—the darling little thing cherub-watched, and nigh inscrutable.

TO J. R. MOZLEY.

CLIFTON,

*November 4, 1882.*

You are quite right about these stories<sup>1</sup>. Keltic, that is it; the Kelt emerging if you will, but the Kelt, if I may say so, a good deal hardened and corrupted by the Saxon. That is Tom Baynes; that is myself, in fact. I never stopped for a moment to think what Tom Baynes should be like: he simply is I, just such a crabbed text, blurred with scholia 'in the margin,' as is your humble servant. So when I am alone, I think and speak to myself always as he does.

Of death, my dear Mozley, I have just one thing to say. I came from Harrogate<sup>2</sup> with this thought: 'Death is not after all so terrible. It is so natural, such an action, such a part of life, that I do not believe I shall ever again fear it much.' This thought was conceived under somewhat favourable conditions: for

<sup>1</sup> His poems.

<sup>2</sup> Where his brother died.

my brother was a very sweet-tempered, kindly man, with great moral strength and self-control. He could not have done anything, could not even have died, in an abject manner. That, I should say, must be very terrible. But looking on death as a thing to be done, and done well, an action which may have its own nobility, I think we can feel very happy.

TO G. H. WOLLASTON.

HÔTEL DU PARC, LUGANO,

May 18, 1883.

'*Gefesselt*' *wie anders?* you too got caught, *entangled* you said. One does, physically as well as morally. I have not the slightest wish ever to leave this place. I give you my word of honour on it. But even my 'word of honour' is a thing hardly worth offering from here. Honour melts, and an irresistible desire to shake off its fetters, together with all other 'considerations,' is the one thing that presses. For instance, to write some frightful lie to Wilson, showing cause why I can't leave Lugano for a month yet, were an excellent device, and surely a pious fraud, if *pious fraud* there be.

Here is a chaplain : he is a D.D. and an archdeacon ; but I could easily represent to Wilson that this man has taken to drinking heavily, and that Béha has earnestly entreated me to take his place until a suitable evangelistic successor turns up. Morality should not hinder me, but the limits of probability as affecting cold northern natures must necessarily condition my methods of deception.



1. I have been up to San Salvatore with E.
2. I have been up Monte Brè alone.
3. We have all three driven round S. Bernardo.
4. We have all three been to Porlezza and back.
5. All three to Ponte Tresa and back.
6. All three to Porlezza, Menaggio, Como, and so home by rail.

To-day we intend *all three* going up M. Generoso. We shall go in the evening, as the heat begins to be very burning. My walk up M. Brè was terrifically hot. That was yesterday.

You will be glad to hear of these 'climms,' such as they are, for they are test 'climms' which satisfy me that I can go up any ordinary English mountain, and make my paths straight for Keswick this summer. Moreover, on Monte Brè did not some women exclaim, 'Come l'uomo va!' God grant that this was not derisive! I don't think it was. I was nearly dead, but I did my best to affect a fine long swing, as of lithest athlete—*Ay di mi!* (is that Carlyle's way of spelling it?).

I have seen a good deal of the people. A girl on the Como boat (Whitsun Monday, festa folk) was a marvel of physical beauty. With her was her lover, not handsome, and a goose. But who would not have been a goose for such a face? Still, of tenderness not one suggestion—all fire, and not celestial fire either. Ah, goose! goose! poor singed goose! onion-stuffed perchance! what fate will be his with that splendid salamander?

An awful climate, isn't it?

A terrible soil that seems to throw out these human

pomegranate blooms in a moment. She looked as if she had just been born—bless her—and her goose! nay, a goose must take care of himself. Very different from this fire angel, flame-winged, literally burning coal of beauty, with her pretensions, her mantilla, her ready, prompt meeting of all eyes, was an absolutely celestial creature, that I met the other day, bearing her big basket, containing manure (I think). This girl smiled at me, a distinct good sweet smile—now is it not marvellous? At *me*. Just like a flower—she saw me before her, no other man—and it was necessary to smile. Derision? Good God! no: like the flowers, Duft, pollen—you know about those things; a natural and most wholesome and lovable expansion. The eyes were of a colour which I cannot determine, and I like such eyes; the fact is, they look at you, they melt down through the whole gamut of colour and leave off with a tongue of the softer fire. Her face was not oval, but very broad; the forehead of the real *tenuis* Horatio-Lycoridian type. As I have not yet come upon any gentians, I accept this girl in lieu of all gentians and other Alpine glories.

TO J. R. MOZLEY.

CLIFTON COLLEGE,

October 30, 1883.

I went up to the great 'gaudy' at Oriel. I should have liked so much to have had an introduction to your uncle, the author of the *Reminiscences*. He was there, but quite silent: I was separated from him,

being at the general table, while he was among the Dii majores. He looked such a dear old mischievous jackdaw of a man. His book is one of the most delightful, and, I think, one of the most brilliant that has appeared since the *Confessions* of Jean Jacques.

(About 1883.)

The *Orlando Furioso*—have you read it? It is just now my constant companion. What a brilliant bird-of-paradise sort of creature it is! I think the hard enamel of this Italian reprobate pleases me better than Spenser with his soft velvet carpet, on which you walk ankle-deep in the moss of yielding allegory.

TO J. R. MOZLEY.

CLIFTON,

October 30, 1883.

We took the Wilsons up behind Lodore<sup>1</sup>, and so away on the heights above Troutdale, descending at last into Troutdale itself. This was in many respects a miraculous day, because it held up most marvelously; there was no sunshine at all, but an eternal grey, peaceful, ever happy, and deliciously sweet and soothing. A great sheet seemed to have been let down knit at the four corners (Skiddaw, Great Gable, Bowfell, Helvellyn), in which were—well, I can't exactly say. Wilson took to crag climbing, at which he is very good: his greatest delight was to get my youngest girl (a small person of some twelve) to climb with him. We got the Wilsons to go up Saddleback.

<sup>1</sup> Account of walks at the Lakes.

Wilson went up the sharp edge like a deer, and pronounced it absolutely 'ridiculous.'

Of sea I have to report deep indigo, with stripes of grey<sup>1</sup>, both fretted with a fine breeze.

Of land, a patchwork of green and brown, very good and clear. Of mountains, a haystacky greeny-brown, quite clear, but somewhat vulgar and obvious. Of the 'brews' (brows, slopes by sea), astonishing abundance of hawkweed, lady's bedstraw, harebell, little blue scabious, wild liquorice, wild thyme, and convolvulus (striped pink and white), all mad with the merriest sunshine, a sunshine that really tickles you.

TO MISS CANNAN.

KESWICK,

*September 13, 1884.*

This is what Mrs. Brown calls the 'spirited portrait,' an expression which, as I take it, conveys somewhat of reproach. It implies that I don't always look 'spirited'—this is to be regretted rather than remedied: let us thank God for the one 'bit o' spir't' that owns, however casually, to have visited me in my declining years.

I have now had a long holiday, indeed nearly three months, and feel very strong in a rugged sort of way; but I never trust that sort of strength much.

Five weeks in the Isle of Man, spent very quietly, were most delightful. I lived on harebells, lady's bedstraw, green waving barley, and a crisp NW. breeze. Here we have all gone in for the activities.

<sup>1</sup> i.e. Manx Sea. He went to the Island from the Lakes.

We have been up all the high mountains, and over most of the passes. All my children go on these expeditions.

One very melancholy thing has happened almost at our door. I mean the death of poor Mr. A. He died at Morecambe about three weeks ago, and was buried at Crosby Ravensworth (his 'ain place'): I was at the funeral. Such a lovely spot, folded in among the moors, itself a cradle of green velvet—no railway, no tourist, God's eternal peace.

TO J. R. MOZLEY.

CLIFTON,

*October 14, 1884.*

Do you know that Ennerdale Bridge is a fearful sell? Brand new church, splendid new board school, the churchyard full of—well, a good many natural graves<sup>1</sup>, but also well stocked with headstones dating from a time earlier than Wordsworth, the dear old impostor 'for the nones.' We turned away in disgust, and walked on to the Angler's Rest. This was most soothing to our exasperated minds. The lake was a fine blue, and there was a strong breeze blowing on it. It is seldom you see one of our lakes like this. Dakyns could not get it out of his head that it was a salt-water loch. In the starlit darkness, later, we

<sup>1</sup> This fragment of a letter refers to the lines of Wordsworth in 'The Brothers':—

'In our churchyard  
Is neither epitaph nor monument,  
Tombstone nor name—only the turf we tread  
And a few natural graves.' To Jane, his wife,  
Thus spake the homely Priest of Ennerdale.—J. R. M.

walked up and down on the little pier, and discussed the *Oedipus Tyrannus* in a way sufficiently exhausting, if not exhaustive. It was a night to remember.

TO G. QUARRY.

VENTNOR, ISLE OF WIGHT,

January 20, 1885.

Thank you very much for the satire. Satire is an undoubted branch of poetry; but I do not affect it much. There is a strong, healthy, noble satire, the *saeva indignatio* of the Latin classics. But, short of that, satire seems only an element of discontent and unhappiness.

I know the 'pip,' the 'black pigs' too, know them well; but they are quite beneath contempt; and nothing on earth would induce me to cross the bright blue of my serenity. I have a great notion of being the master of my own happiness, and not suffering it to be contingent on the manners and conduct of other people.

If a man slights me, he does me no harm; but if his conduct is detrimental to the general good, if he is unjust, a villain in high place, a seducer, a poison, a snare to the innocent, then have at him! though, *constitutionally*, I had rather leave him alone.

The sum of happiness in the world is not too large. I would like, if possible, to increase it by the modest contribution of my own store. If so, I must guard it from all disturbance; and poetry enables me to do this, gives me a thousand springs of joy, in none of

which there is one drop of bitterness—and thank God for that!

We are here in the I. of Wight, busy comparing it with the I. of Man, of course. It is really a beautiful island, not merely as regards richness of vegetation, an ornament that just now is not available, but also for its configuration. The 'lay of the land,' the attitude, and gesture of the lines are admirable. The coast is dismally inferior to ours; glens are not to be seen, and streams are puny, but very clean. On the whole we give the preference to Mona, and that upon purely aesthetic, not patriotic, grounds.

I hope you are all well and thriving. Accept my best wishes for the New Year. Your satire discloses perhaps a slight biliary secretion—all satire, I fear, is bile—I hope I may impute it to Christmas festivities rather than to any permanent disorder!

PS.—I return the verses, as I think you would like to keep them.

TO J. R. MOZLEY.

CLIFTON,

May 7, 1885.

I stayed nearly a week longer at Cadenabbia, alone. I went up to the San Martino, and continued my walk on to the Monte Crocione. Here I came upon the most perfect paradise of flowers I ever beheld anywhere, and was helped to pick them by the most exquisite of nature's gentlemen, a young Italian peasant, or perhaps I ought to say farmer. I also climbed Monte San Primo. Much of my walk that



day I had in company with a merry little shopkeeper of Bellagio. I was forced to talk some sort of Italian, and we talked and laughed, and walked and chaffed, and ate and drank with each other. I was about seven or eight hours in his company.

TO J. R. MOZLEY.

CLIFTON,

May 25, 1885.

Victor Hugo! I am one of the Hugo-maniacs, absolutely certain that there has been no poet like him since Shakespeare. It is very curious, is it not? how *absolutely certain* we Hugonians feel about this. It seems to me quite amazing that it is not universally recognized. I know that I ought not to be amazed; but I assure you that I am, most unfeignedly. I don't want you to argue with me at all, but merely to *constater* it as a fact, that there are men to whom this position of Victor Hugo in the history of literature seems as axiomatically obvious as the position of the sun in the solar system.

TO J. R. MOZLEY<sup>1</sup>.

LAKE VIEW, KESWICK,

September 10, 1885.

Shortly before leaving Clifton a worthy Frenchman put into my hands Reynaud's *Terre et Ciel*, a mystico-theological scientific book of enormous dimensions, and considerable pretensions. That has gone a long way; I have read it! I have read, with much pleasure,

<sup>1</sup> Written while laid up with a sprained ankle.

Mrs. Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*, and am much in love with Molly Gibson, whose father also is very nice. But the great discovery, or rather re-discovery, has been Scott. I have read *Waverley*, *Old Mortality*, *Woodstock*, *Redgauntlet*, *Bride of Lammermoor*, *Rob Roy*, and am now reading *Quentin Durward*. They quite spring on me, these old darlings. What a man!! I am full of 'wonder, love, and praise'; I seem to see all manner of great and good things; but the main thing is—the joy and the glory of it all is—what I suppose the French mean by *verve*, at any rate what I understand by that favourite term of French criticism. The inexhaustible streaming and bubbling up of the great old heart of him, his own boundless enjoyment of it all; this is health to the navel and marrow to the bones.

TO THE REV. E. W. KISSACK.

CLIFTON,

September 18, 1885.

Many thanks for your kind thoughtfulness. I have, however, a copy of my father's poems, which was given me lately by 'Brown of the *Times*,' and I do not think I want another, nor ought I, in fact, to trespass on Mrs. Gawne's goodness. Perhaps you would like to keep the copy yourself; these little *κειμήλια* have value for those who remember and cherish the remembrance of old times. There is no house which could more appropriately contain this volume than the Rectory of Bride.

We should not forget either that true woman of

genius, Hester Nelson. Often I think of her, and her early doom; and Bride seems to me a shrine of splendid promise and aspirations unfulfilled save in God. Is she buried there? I suppose so. My father thought very highly of her poems. Some he thought worthy of Milton. And that was all breathed in and bred from your Bride hills, and the long stretches of the Ayre. Could you possibly get me a copy of her poems? You would be conferring on me an inestimable favour.

Yes, I am lame, a 'lamiter,' as they say in Yorkshire. But I must not complain; I have had a delightful quiet time, good for the mind and soul of me, and not amiss for the body either. Our first disappointment has been my inability to get over to the Island. I feel how precious the time is 'in that particular,' knowing how unlikely it is that I shall have many more opportunities of seeing the dearest of my old friends, the Archdeacon. I had even been flattering myself with the thought that he would have let me preach before him this year, and I had been meditating some words such as might have cheered him, both as regards the bourne to which he is hastening, and the fidelity to his memory and to his principles of those whom he will, in all probability, leave behind him. To me it would have been an interesting occasion, and for myself profitable, as it would have put one upon considering how much of the old belief I still retain, a consideration the outcome of which would have been to realize that in all essentials I am heartily in agreement still with this truly wise and good man. With the eye steadily fixed on the further shore, the

windings and aberrations of any course which has not been a vicious one are lost in the straightness of that single aim. And at last we shall meet there, some by a direct and simple passage, others by long tacks and beatings to windward. On the beach stands the one Christ.

TO HASTINGS CROSSLEY.

CLIFTON,

*December 29, 1885.*

I don't know how to thank you for your great kindness. It would, indeed, be most delightful if I could accept your invitation, an invitation so thoughtful, so thought out in the pleasantest alternatives and dovetailings of tempting facility. But I am quite a prisoner still.

Altogether, my holidays must be given to the pursuit of health under one of her most obvious conditions, to wit, that of locomotion. No progress that I may make in this art will lead me as far as Ireland. It is provoking, and indeed I am provoked, and disappointed, and rather weary. Such perfect kindness and goodness as yours comes like sunshine through the cloud, but what would it not be to realize the happiness of it all there, at Glenburn—the very name of the place suggestive, ardent?

Here I had your brother-in-law, but he is gone to Lyme with Davies. I rejoice to think that he is having this change, not, you may be sure, without due remembrance of *Persuasion*, and that dreadful accident on the 'Cobb'—is that the name of the bulwark there?

Now that he is gone, I am with my books, and that is rather pleasant. I don't know whether you read Italian; but I think you do. It is a great fad of mine to try luck upon the things our forefathers liked, the books, one might perhaps say, that formed them. Of course I mean *the* books. Now one sees everywhere what a person Petrarch has been! what an influence! Wherever I see this kind of thing, I set myself diligently to realize it. I will not permit the fraction of a doubt as to the justice of their admiration. I believe implicitly that our forbears were not fools, and that they knew what they were about. I begin, therefore, by defying all carpers and sneerers who would tell me that Petrarch was artificial, and so forth. There *must* be more in the matter than this. The results are always most satisfactory. I have succeeded by constant, *patient*, reverent reading of the *Rime* in tuning my mind to the pitch of *circiter* 1350. I mean, of course, to the point of reading the poems with the *bona fides*, sympathy, and surrender which it is quite certain the men of his own time readily granted to Petrarch, and which for centuries afterwards this noble poet obtained at the hands of the ingenuous. This is a great thing to gain, if but for a moment, a Pisgah-glimpse of retrospective vision.

But I must not presume upon my privilege of invited guest to bore you with my pleasures or my pains.

I think I do know S. well. What many people might not so readily observe is his *strength*. The man is the finest Damask steel; I have never conversed with a more graceful or more athletic mind.

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

CLIFTON,

December 30, 1885.

W. tells me that you are studying mathematics with a view to the higher physics—*Macte virtute!* That is certainly good, much better, more masculine, sane, and noble, than our eternal teaching of beggarly elements. Go on, Worthington! no treadmill for you but a *scala caeli!* Meantime I also—well, no—I'm not—I'm nowhere. . . . I have a trick, a dodge, an as who would say *homo sum*, &c.; but my studies are mere sympathies, caught casual from brambles by the way—a flower, sir, mayhap, a poor flower at your service—a very wretched little flower—has a smell perchance, a colour—*ay di mi!* 'creeses! creeses! who'll buy my fresh creeses?' comes to 'creeses' after all.

There is one trick I would fain learn, and that is the homely trick of walking upon my legs like a man—'*Homo sum.*' Yes, but what's the good of that, if I am only *implumis* and not *bipes*? Positively the doctors have done nothing for me, and I am after all to go up and see Sir James Paget. I can't walk 200 yards, and that is crawling.

To me, thus, enter the patrons of three livings: Aberford near Leeds, Wray on Windermere, and a place in Berkshire. Of course I can't go and see these interesting 'cures,' so must forbear them. Wray is delicious; no need for me to go and see it; and Wray is £100 a year. So *J'y suis, j'y reste*; and this demi-semi dip into the ecclesiastical lucky-bag has

given me rather a turn, a turn which may affect my plans seriously and permanently.

My old friend M., like the 'goodest' of creatures, went and saw the Leeds place for me: even wrote to me from the Swan Inn, Aberford, a detailed account of all and sundry the matters pertaining to the poor problem. But he finishes by saying that I ought not to take a living—*voici le texte*. 'I believe that God and Christ (for you know that I believe in their ever-living power as in that of all good and true spirits who each in their order have passed through death) could open to you truer ways of life, and will if you trust them.' These are bracing words, and perhaps I needed them: but we shall see. . . . I shall probably go, and Mrs. Brown with me, to Eastbourne. Do you know the place? Would Hastings be better? I see, by the papers, Parnell is there. I should so like to meet him: we would cheer each other about Home Rule; in fact, I would propound to him a constitution, viz. that of the Isle of Man, . . . 24 Keys, or Taxiarchi. There are 4 provinces in Ireland, are there not? 24 is divisible by 4 . . .  $\frac{24}{4}$ , *voilà tout!* What fools politicians are!

Being pregnant with these imperial purposes I receive an invitation from the Crossleys, and how I should like to go! suppressing for the nonce my Fenian projects. But—

The engagement of S. is in many ways very delightful; but perhaps perilously delightful! How I shall pray for them! For, if it is precarious, so are all the loveliest things. . . . Let us pray.

Dakyns has levanted, I don't know where, but very



likely to the Levant. Irwin is down at Lyme Regis smoking with Davies, and trying to ensnare that Welsh person into the charmed circle of Jane Austen and *Persuasion*.

For me, I read much French and Italian ; have made the acquaintance of Lamartine ; have read Petrarch (*Rime*) *all through*, the first time I ever did that. I really think I should have been a very accomplished, perhaps even delightful youth, if I had done these things thirty-five years ago. Now it seems like decorating a tomb ; smothering my dismal old coffin with wreaths—conventional ? no ! no ! don't say that ! Petrarch has sap in him. How all the generations have sucked the juice ! There can be no mistake about it. Hang the coffin ! *apricos necte flores* : and let them be a garland for grey hairs, but not for death ! I believe in the art of medicine rather than in that of surgery as applied to the soul. We must have faith ; put into you good and gracious and salubrious things, and somehow or other they shall sweeten your blood, making it perfumed, ichorian. I could write a prescription. *Recipe Petrarchi* viii. &c., &c. . . . *Capiat*. Fill it up as you will.

I am constantly wearying — and 'sich' with this notion of mine. But they have got so engrained in them the idea of direct and conscious imitation which their classical scholarship has made habitual and necessary to their mind's movement that I can't stir up much faith in 'those cold hearts of theirs.' For the highest uses I am confident that you must take in the influences through the skin, through the chyle, through repeated but ineffable infusions, baths,

emollients, smells, tacts, drops, bedewings, expositions as of ozone paper—in short, quiet submittings of one's self to the spirit one loves and desires. My father taught me this method; vulgarly, you may call it the 'soaking' method. Now, if Hebe were to make my bath, it would be such an one.

When are you likely to come here? Mind you stay with us when you do. From the pole opposite to yours I feel that we can meet in a congenial centre. But it is all at your expense, I must admit. I cannot follow you into your mathematico-physical cave. I don't 'do with' caves of any kind. But you seem never to have any difficulty in getting out among the flowers, and the hearts and the 'like o' yandhar.' I rather think you are to be the more envied. To come out from a keen abstract atmosphere of problem into the sunshine of vitality, emotional, conscious vitality—what a sensation! You have it, I have not. Are you something like a miner? blinded by the light, staggering heavily with laden eyes against the dawn when your night-shift is over? I don't think so. You come out and begin to play immediately. Does that mean that you have not been far in? No, I think not. I must drop the mine: it's not a mine; it's a mountain, and you come down to the valley and the games.

Particularly remember me most kindly to Mrs. Worthington, who, I hope, is getting much stronger than I. All join in affectionate wishes for the New Year.

## TO MISS CANNAN.

CLIFTON,

*March 1, 1886.*

I begin to feel something like an old wrecker down on a lee shore after sunset, watching the big ships.

My brother has ringed me round all my life with moral strength and abettance; I hardly knew how much. What is it? Not direct control or suggestion, but a sort of taking each other for granted. You know something of it, and you know the blank on the other side of the leaf too.

In many ways I am well content. My brother had had a glorious life, had hit hard, and thoroughly realized his blows. In his best lectures he has said things which are contributions to the literature—hard-headed, racy, brilliant, humorous things; things most delightful, most original; things easily apprehended of and not easily forgotten by the people.

It is a great thing for his children to have had such a father: they speak of him as their 'glorious father.' He was, though I say it, of a good stock. We have a Keltic root in the Isle of Man, but of that he seemed to have little or nothing. I don't undervalue it, only he hadn't it in him. He was his mother's own child: I wish you had known her, she was a great woman. A pure borderer she was—her father a Thomson from the Scotch side, her mother a Birkett from the Cumbrian side of Cheviot. I don't suppose the earth contains a stronger race, and she had all its strength: she was typical; so was my

brother Hugh. Well, he has ridden his ride and made his mark in many a foray, and now he is where Skelton is. Could it be better?

My sister Margaret lives now at Cardiff. We are all that remain in this country. I have a brother in Queensland. We must try and pull together somehow; but how hard it is!

TO MRS. WILLIAMSON.

PLAS ISA, PENMAENMAWR,

*August 11, 1886.*

The Carnedds are really noble mountains, and I have been tramping along the whole ridge from Tal-y-fan by Moel Fras to Carnedd David.

I delicately and carefully follow this ridge, poise myself upon a watershed 'as upon a horse,' and thus escape; very few people go up there. How delicious the mosses are! and the quartz blocks! and the singing streams! Always new to me! the blessed things! The slope Conway-wards is quite full of streams, which, high up, come gurgling through unfathomable beds of moss: the whole mountain is one sweet golden gurgle. I never weary of them; they are never stupid, though they have been saying the same thing since 'the dry land appeared.' I lie down, first by one, then by another, and I am gross enough to dip a bit of bread in their lovely green cups, and eat the sop—that is so refreshing. I also, occasionally, light a pipe, and burn incense to these little gods. Often I only stop a few moments, don't even sit down, but stoop and cower me over the

clucking of the subterranean innocent, which is almost a laugh, a *chuckle*.

There are large streams, with falls all the way! Yes, bless ye! and a flat stone right under the chiefest fall. And what 'suld hinder' but that a man on that stone sit stark naked? What, indeed, but some stony-eyed idiotic sheep! So there I sit, and *am* a god; peculiar looking, I dare say, not exactly Olympian—no! but, hang it! what would you have?

I intend coming to Ramsey on Monday, Aug. 3. . . . On Thursday, Aug. 23, I shall come to Braddan Churchyard about noon. I wish we could meet there. . . .

TO MRS. WILLIAMSON.

PENMAENMAWR,

August 18, 1886.

I was up Tryfan the other day, that fine rock pyramid over Lake Ogwyn, and got on capitally, though it is all regular rock-climbing. Certainly on Tryfan one uses one's hands and knees as much as one's feet. There is, I think, no more beautiful creature in the world than this mountain. It will hold its own with anything in Switzerland; I don't mean for difficulty, but for beauty. This morning I examined the tombstones in Dwgrfylchy Churchyard, and am confirmed in my suspicion, which is gradually becoming a belief, that the intense Welsh national feeling, and the determination to keep their language, are matters of the nineteenth-century Romance movement. Certainly in the eighteenth I don't believe the Welsh

desired anything more than to be thoroughly English. I want to know the history of these Eisteddfods, and all the rest of it; are they not a mere modern growth, or, at least, a monstrous development of an old institution? What I seem to smell is *gas*, inflation, the factitious. So I think of writing to a Liverpool paper about this. It's just the time now, and I may succeed in getting up a nice little shindy—Taliessin, Eos Morlais, Mr. Lewis Morris, of Penbryn, and Rev. Ward Beecher, of New York, to the rescue!

There is the almost total ignorance of English—capital, in its way, but deucedly inconvenient; and, of course, just when one gets that silence one has longed for, there arises a desperate craving for talk, for 'colloghing': the people seem intellectually fit, too. Those, however, who speak English, speak it so exquisitely that you carry the music of it with you for hours afterwards. The landlord of the Gemmaes Inn was an exception: I must tell you about him when we meet.

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

PLAS ISA, PENMAENMAWR,

*September 4, 1886.*

*Gloria periit!* nor has there been much *gloria*. But I have been over in the Island. . . . My Peel expedition was a happy combination of things—sea blue as heaven, crisp heather, dwarf gorse, rock black, buff, purple, barley waving! . . . Of poems, or for poems, protoplasm enough, I dare say, but not many immediate suggestions. Yes, just one, a bride

coming home to her house which two women had been left to clean and take care of.

I was startled rather to find that the Island is one moving ant-hill of story. I believe if I were living there permanently, I should get whole 'cart-loads' of this lore. It seemed splendid; the very ground teems and sparkles. I had no idea that such a number of silkworms were there spinning their quaint cocoons night and day. The Island seems, indeed, to do hardly anything else. The brains are always going, I almost heard them at it: I didn't sleep much, and all through the night these shuttles seemed to be flying round me—it is a darling race! In Wales the same, no doubt, but to me unknown and unknowable. The Manx life (that is unrelated to England) I find to be deeper, stronger, and richer than I had thought—driven in upon itself, and curiously coloured by that fact. Hang on to the Britannic mammae, O Dakyns, and make the most of them! But I must go my own way, and my mother has not yet forgotten me. Kindest love to you all.

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

CLIFTON,

October 18, 1886.

I note many things in your letter with great delight. Primarily the good news about Mrs. Worthington: I hope to hear even still better before long. Then your Ingleton life—how splendid! What a bath to plunge into! You are just the age to enjoy that—old enough to *sanction* those love passages more or



less gracefully, young enough to sympathize with them; young enough to—shall I say dance? old enough to surrender yourself to a kindly violin, possibly—a rubber? I know Kirkby Lonsdale, but not well, nor is my knowledge of recent date.

I did very well in the Isle of Man; had two good solitary walks, drank deep draughts of—I don't know how to describe it—that social brewage which I get nowhere else. Very likely other people get it in their own old habitats. But it really does seem to me as if the whole Island was quivering and trembling all over with *stories*—they are like leaves on a tree. The people are always telling them to one another, and any morning or evening you hear, whether you like it or not, innumerable anecdotes, sayings, tragedies comedies—I wonder whether they lie fearfully. They are a marvellously *narrational* community. And you've not been there a day before all this closes round you with a quiet familiarity of 'use and custom' which is most fascinating. Nothing else in the universe seems of any consequence.

And warly cares, and warly men,  
May a' gae tapsalteerie, O!

A week more and I should have become reabsorbed into this medium past recovery and past recognition. . . .

I have been musing a good deal over my 'Dooiney Molla<sup>1</sup>': he is now taking shape, and looms rather large. I believe you will like him, and his fiery little groom. These good souls do well to visit my dreams:

<sup>1</sup> See *The Manx Witch*, p. 47:

'dooiney-molla—man-praiser—the friend who backs the suitor.'

they are such a comfort: and do you know they positively do 'go on' in my dreams. Here are two lines which came tripping at the window of my slumbers last night—

1. 'When the sun was jus' puttin' on his shoes'  
(morning),

for which I instantly seemed to discover a parallel—to wit—

'Sthreelin' off his golden stockings' (the sun again, evening).

2. 'Jus' rags tore off the Divil's ould shirt' (= witches' charms, or spells).

There will be a very good witch in this poem, I promise you: look out! —<sup>1</sup> are sounding me about 'The Doctor'; . . . they would try to make it a popular book. The others tried to make it a drawing-room book, with the result that the few purchasers thereof hid it somewhere behind their bookshelves, and even there trembled for the morals of the housemaids.

TO J. C. TARVER.

CLIFTON,

October 9, 1887.

I wish I could send you *Bouvard et Pécuchet*. I have just one number of it—isn't it tantalizing? It began in the *Nouvelle Revue* of Dec. 15, 1880. But it is now published in the series of Flaubert's works, so that you can get it easily enough. It is *merum*

<sup>1</sup> Certain publishers.

*sal*, the style much terser than is usual with Flaubert, downright anatomy indeed; but that yields a certain dryness of the Amontillado kind which is almost unique. Then the cynicism is so very special—an innocent, lambent brand which, again, I think men ought to apprehend with relish.

But I weary you. Poor G. Sand! I am reading her *Amours de l'Âge d'Or*. Woe is me! what awful stuff! an echo, and a sufficiently rueful one, of the *Chute d'un Ange*, with reference (explicit and stated) to that sound performance, Reynaud's *Terre et Ciel*.

Why do you say that *your star is on the decline*? Do you mean intellectually? from the context I infer that you do. But how is that? Let me try a remedy: or rather let me ask you to try a remedy. Fling open your soul! ['gush'? No!]*—*throw your classics and all your 'goods and chattels' out of window, give yourself light and air ['ventilation'? Yes!]. Live, and—well, out it must come—love! For if you and some of my other friends think you are going to do anything in the world without making your bow to the lady that rules over Cyprus, I can tell you you are very much mistaken. What I want in all young men is more insanity. Therefore I would much rather hear of your writing poems than essays. It is true that at your time of life the poetic mustum might well have been raked off, and the pure and limpid prose be beautifully on tap and ready for drinking. But then, have you passed through the fever at all? That is the point; all the better if it's over; but it must *be*, or else *you* will not be.

TO J. C. TARVER.

CLIFTON,

October 16, 1887.

Pardon my saying that I don't think you will get the full *succus* out of the tremendous Bovary marrow-bone, if you look upon it as a satire.

You yourself confess that it has knocked you out of time, and you are going to read it again. You can't read it too often. I will ask you, when you read it the second time, to think of it as a tragedy. Try that method at any rate; I feel sure it is the right one. Then the whole terror will come out. Madame Bovary *is* an exceptional woman. She is not like Messalina, but fate-borne like Clytemnestra. Pity her! she is pathetic! believe me she is, and intended to be so. The men are not adequate; there is the central poignancy of it all—the *hobereau*—is he much more? the *commis*—dreadful creatures. But Madame Bovary staggers into their arms drunk with the most infernal philtre, her eyes blinded with a mist as fatal as that which befooled Pasiphaë.

Get rid of the satire notion, and approach this awful ruin as a ruin—let it be to you a Baalbec, not a Lupanar.

Woe! woe! woe! I can't think of her without tears. God forgive me if I do now and then laugh.

But *Bouvard et Péc . . . !!!* It is true and unmixed enjoyment to read such a book. How innocent it is! And the style! Where did he get that ringing simplicity? How I should like to meet a Frenchman like that! Bless him! The honesty of the laughter! isn't it perfect?

By-the-bye, I have found my old numbers of the *Revue*, and am enjoying myself more than I can say. It would be most delightful to read it with you. It is pre-eminently a book for mutual recognition: one naturally looks for another face. But here is no one except Dakyns, and he is buried innumerable fathoms deep under a translation of Xenophon! God help him!

TO J. C. TARVER.

CLIFTON,

November 30, 1887.

I follow you on the Flaubert trail, panting! In the holidays perhaps I may catch you up. You have, of course, read *Salammbô*. Do you read de Musset? For style (prose) he is certainly A 1. It would be hard to beat the *Confessions*. How good to be feeding on this fine stuff! Only remember there is Italian! By all the pipes smoked in W.'s study, by all the bristles of his mighty beard, by every quill upon the fretful N., by a thousand tender memories, I implore you to cultivate this divine field!

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

CLIFTON,

January 1, 1888.

The sorry I am! I really believe I shall not get to Town after all. *Durum et*, but I fear a case of *corrigere est nefas*. The fact is I have smashed my right hand at fives, and am under care of the surgeon! Was there ever such an old fool! I manage to write at the rate of about a line a minute, but what with,

splint and iodine it is a sorry business; and so I enter '88—*quod faustum sit!* These very Latin quotations reveal the state I'm in—a touch of imbecility—eh?

Mind you read Hall Caine's *Deemster*; it is little short of a masterpiece. Read it, and tell me what you think. You are an excellent critic. Did you know that? Well, you are. I am so glad, so are we all, to hear what you say about Mrs. Worthington. The gods are good after all. I knew you would like G. Sand. As soon as you have finished, please return, as I shall want them soon. I am reading (for I can't say which time) Hugo's plays. *Cromwell*, however, I had never read before. It is an enormous congeries of circumstance. You know how I admire old Hugo, but I am not blind to his nonsense—e. g. he describes Cromwell as cherishing through life the bitterest grudge against the aristocracy, because, when at Oxford (*sic*), he had been ordered off the turf in the quad, 'reserved for the nobly-born alone'—Cromwell retired to his *cellule* furious. Shall I send you the passage—typical French, is it not? The brightest and happiest of New Years to you both, specially to the lambkin of '87. So say we all.

TO J. R. MOZLEY.

CLIFTON,

May 23, 1888<sup>1</sup>.

. . . I try to force my poor nervous spirit to take this limitation. But oh, how hard! I try to live and

<sup>1</sup> In a time of great trouble. Mrs. Brown died in July of this year. What this loss meant to him may be learnt from these four letters, and what it continued to be from that of Sept. 12, 1891, p. 152. (Cf. October 24, 1880.)—J. R. M.

think and feel just *de die in diem*. I try to fence in for each day a sort of cofferdam of exclusion: but the past comes from great depths which are uncontrollable by any engineering of mine, and the future spreads its enormous vacuum. . . .

One thing emerges—my absolute belief in immortality. I am not naturally a materialist; that is a plant not native to my mind; but scales of materialism have sometimes grown upon my eyes. They now vanish utterly, and I am dazzled and confounded by the inevitable presence, the close connatural rebound of the belief. I have always been an idealist, subject to these dim spots of material feculence that from time to time have obscured my vision. Now I feel my body to be nothing but an integument, and the inveteracy of the material association to be a tie little more than momentary, and quite casual. Death is the key to another room, and it is the very next room. I wish words could convey to you how intensely and profoundly I feel this.

We do really owe much to the medical art, if it only smooths the passage, making it painless. For, amongst other things, it makes death so beautiful.

TO MISS CANNAN.

CLIFTON,

*June 26, 1888.*

I know well how your brother would have sympathized with me, how he would have 'hung on' about the house. He had much of that fidelity, dog-like, dumb except through the eyes. The



property is not common, nor are those eyes the heritage of every man. I don't think I must write more.

TO MISS E. BROWN.

ULLESWATER,

*July 10, 1888.*

This day week, what a morning! And to-day the dawn is beautiful, but ominous. . . . Yesterday I went over to Grasmere by the Grisedale Pass. It rained tremendously, and I got soaked. I then walked to Thirlspot, lunching at Wythburn: every step reminded me of last year—the place, for instance, where we picked blackberries, and, above all, the old room in the Wythburn Inn, where we so often have had tea in such joyous fashion. . . . I wanted to climb Helvellyn from Thirlspot. . . . It was dark, but clear; from the top, Ulleswater was seen in brilliant sunshine; but I was under a sort of big umbrella of cloud; no rain, however, only a fierce wind. What could I think of, but ——? I almost felt the cairn could breathe some answer to me. There was not a soul near, unless, indeed, —— was herself there: and I often feel as if she was, and was smiling very sweetly, not without a faint tinge of humour at all my poor weary longings. I went down Striding Edge, and really, when it is blowing hard, as it was yesterday, you have to be careful. . . . The people here are very good and attentive: not having much to do, they seem to enjoy looking after me. I asked for ink in my bedroom, and behold a beautiful little writing-table—wasn't that kind?

Of visitors, very few—not gentlefolk, but well-meaning souls enough, especially two lads from Macclesfield, who, speaking a dialect that is to me nearly unintelligible, are from their modesty, simplicity, and total absence of affectation, quite charming. ‘What’s yon?’ said one of them to me, producing a piece of stag-horn moss which he had carefully treasured as a plant of a rare species. The honesty of the fellows! and they are bigger and stronger looking than most of our Clifton boys, beside being somewhat older. It is so satisfactory that they can be all I have described, and yet not a bit *swell*: well-dressed they are, and well-mannered; but that is all! A large ‘all’ though, is it not?

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

CLIFTON,

July 29, 1888.

Your letter is one of the few that have gone to my very heart. Only I can’t conceive what you mean by attributing to yourself a lack of insight. I have heard from just a few how much they loved my wife. Those who have said this are united to me by an eternal tie.

You were at Ulleswater: I knew you were there; and, having previously determined to go there for a week, I did not suffer this knowledge to make any change in my plans. I wanted to be alone, and yet not alone. I should have gladly found you there. I got there on Saturday, July 7, and stayed at the Ulleswater Hotel till Friday, July 13. You must have

left Patterdale before I came. How sweet and peaceful the place was! I climbed Helvellyn; it was a sad, but a delicious time. I walked by the Grisedale Pass first through drenching rain to Grasmere, thence to Wythburn and Thirlspot. Here I had arranged to go up Helvellyn in the *ipsa vestigia* —, as she climbed last year, and felt for the first time that her climbing days were numbered. It was indeed a *via crucis*; she had to stop almost every twenty yards; and we were both amazed and beyond measure perplexed. I was now alone upon Helvellyn, except that an honest shepherd called upon his dog. Well, — you can guess what all that meant.

My children are so good that I am always thanking God for them. . . . O God! how must it be with those who are left childless! Thus it is with poor B., from whom I had a mournful line the other day through a friend of his and mine.

I am so glad to hear that your babe thrives; even that little thing, you say, is a comfort to her mother; how will it be then when the deep fountains are broken up! All happiness to you all.

TO THE REV. E. W. KISSACK.

LAKE VIEW, KESWICK,

August 7, 1888.

We sit on the same form in a very sad school. God help us to bear its doubtless wholesome discipline! To feel one's own weakness is to feel His strength. How overwhelmingly, though, does this weakness rush in upon one at times! What a giving way of

everything! What a sinking beneath one of the whole universe!

But then it is we feel the great arms holding us up with the strength and the tenderness of eternity.

My dear fellow sufferer, what is it after all? why this sinking of the heart, this fainting, sorrowing of the spirit? There is no separation: life is continuous.

All that was stable and good, good and therefore stable, in our union with the loved one, is unquestionably permanent, will endure for ever. It cannot be otherwise. Those who marry without love need not concern us. When love has done its full work, has wrought soul into soul so that every fibre has become part of the common life—*quis separabit?*

Can you conceive yourself as existing at all without *her*? No, you can't; well, then, it follows that you don't, and never will. The process of blending has been too complete to admit of separation. This is God's blessing on perfect unions. O Kissack, this is true! But 'the climbing mother' will rise unbidden, and what shall we do? *corrigere est nefas*: so said poor Horace; there is a clenching of the teeth on those words. Resignation then, O Flaccus, try that! and indeed he does with his *levius fit patientia*. But resignation to what? Some dark fate with dumb lips and eyes that are inscrutable? No, but to a kind and gracious Father. That is the sum of all. Dear, kind friend, as surely as God liveth, we shall be united again to the precious ones in a union that is already begun, and only needs the removal of a very thin barrier of partition to become the rapture of an absolute joy.

TO J. C. TARVER.

CLIFTON,

June 9, 1889.

I am now reading *Anna Karénina*, and gradually wondering more and more, as who must not, when such a planet 'swims within his ken'? But the French translation seems poor. I must learn Russian; and I swear I will. That's what Vaughan did.

Most of my poor leisure, though, is just now given to Tasso. He is marvellously brilliant: though not so philosophical as Spenser, he is, if possible, more poetical.

I still stick to my thesis, that Italian is the great enlightener and clarifier of wits.

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

ROYAL CASTLE HOTEL, LYNTON,

June 29, 1889.

I came away from Commem. row yesterday. This place is most heavenly; I knew it would be. The foxgloves are astounding, whole fields embattled with them, densely, *instructa acie*. And the size, the real hundred-barrelled revolver kind. You know Lynton? If you know, then, shortly, you know something about Heaven. I bow respectfully to your Mürrens, and your Grindelwalds, also, though not so respectfully to your Interlakens; but we too! O yes! by Tam! yes. E.g. this morning at 7, slipping a sea-pillow under my neck in Wrinkle Cove Bay—what? lying on my back with the salt water sipping, or fiz-foaming under my occiput, a tranquil

gaze to a sky as blue as that of Schweiz, with one gull somewhere near the zenith just to hold up my nib<sup>1</sup>—ha! have I touched you? yes! yes! yes! by Tam! we too. . . .

TO J. R. MOZLEY.

RAMSEY,

August 20, 1889.

I should like to pay all reverence to that oracle [Delphi], and to all the other oracles; and I see their political importance. But, subjectively, I want to know what the Greek religion did for a man in the exigencies of life and death. A Greek death-bed, other than that of Socrates; the equivalent, if any, of the clergyman, the pious friend, the whole scene with its lights and shades, the anxieties, the consolations,—that is the one direction in which my mind wanders and scrutinizes. You know my conviction that Greek life was not so far removed from our life, that all human life is homogeneous, and that the *Einkleidung* is of much the same texture, however the colour and other accidents may differ. A dear, good old Greek dying, ‘in sure and certain hope’ of something; I believe in that Greek profoundly.

TO MRS. WILLIAMSON.

COBURG HOUSE, COBURG ROAD, NORTH RAMSEY,

August 23, 1889.

My cold has been on me about five days. But before that, I bathed and climbed and was happy enough. Behold the wondrous tale! . . .

<sup>1</sup> nib or neb = nose.

Braddan, twice: first, with the children; second, with my friend M., who spent four days with us. The second visit was on a Sunday, last Sunday: church (new) and churchyard (old) crammed, like a fair, or a bazaar; people quiet, on the whole, but pressing steadily upwards from the lower gate, with a curious expectant look on their faces, as if about to be shown some monster—a two-headed parson, or something of that sort. We went into the church, and sat at a long service. The curate preached on Judas Iscariot; the vicar conducted a service in the churchyard. ‘Judas did this, Judas thought that’; then from the churchyard, in stentorian chorus, ‘Crown Him! crown Him! crown Him! crown Him Lord of all.’ Thus, you see, there was an element of the comic; but oh, how sad it was to me, how incomprehensible! Verily, I am left behind; I can’t, after all these years, adjust myself to the dimensions of such a change. The people behaved better than they used to do in our time; but the numbers! the systematization! the total absence of the native population! the show atmosphere! the ‘Walk up, gentlemen’ style of thing! Over all this Vanity Fair the dear old bells rang out precisely as of old. Ah, but the old life is gone, is ‘hid with Christ in God.’ Wasn’t it strange to turn up towards the Strang, rather than the Vicarage, when the service was ended? We saw old Drury’s grave: I had much ado to come by it. There were none but ‘Cottons’ in the cemetery. I thought I had got hold of a Manxman, and asked him ‘where Mr. Drury’s grave was.’ He answered with a leer, and the accent of—say Ashton-under-Lyne! . . .



Hills above the Gob-y-volley at the mouth of Sulby Glen, twice; perfection of gorse hassocks, tufted with bell-heather, also of ling in sheets, sprinkled with the bell-heather—the sea-rim rounding all with glorious blue—the ‘steamer’ going round the island with an almost impudent familiarity of approach, like ‘a Cotton’ throwing his arms round the neck of a pretty Manx country-girl—‘smookin, too, the dirt’! These commons westward of Sulby Glen, between it and Ballaugh Glen, are most delightful; but they contain one fraud, and that is the *Chibbyr-inch*. This purports to be a *sacred well*; and I dare say it has been one. The name means ‘the well in the rock.’ My friend and I sought it with the keenest interest, but all one found was a very dirty puddle, and no appearance of rock. But the good people over here swear by these things. ‘Chibbyr-inch! Chibbyr-inch! my gough, is it Chibbyr-inch? I’ve been at it scores of times. Wasn’t the ould people used to go up with bottles to get the water? Ter’ble good for sore eyes, they’re sayin’.’

Quite so, but all the same, no one has any real vital memory or knowledge; and thus it is with all Manx assertions: the spirit of exaggeration, of gasconade, of total irresponsibility, of saying anything that it may be convenient or flattering to themselves or others to say. . . . And how the feeling haunts me that I belong to this race! that the same spirit, chastened a little, perhaps, is in me; that the very words I have just written show symptoms of this failing, a failing which may in the possession of a great master become a positive source of treasure, but as possessed and

used is wholly an impediment! The whole island seems strewn with the rubbish of slatternly inaccuracies and over-statements; it would be quite refreshing to take a walk in the narrowest and least decorated lane of simple truth. I will read a few propositions of Euclid every morning.

Great excursion to the Chasms: slept at Port St. Mary. Took boat to the cave at Sugar-loaf, went through it twice, heard the deep ringing of the sea-hammers. You know it, the most awful sound in nature. I went up to Rushen Church next morning; it rained, and was dismal; but I saw the graves of the Corrins.

Yesterday there was a great picnic at the White Strand. Of course I was unable to go, and stayed at home to nurse my ear, and to finish reading *The Mill on the Floss*, which I did with many tears. Who can read that last scene otherwise?

TO MISS E. BROWN.

LAKE VIEW,

September 5, 1889.

To you I inscribe this scrawl written with a pen that must have dropped from the wing of Beelzebub himself.

Yesterday I went across the lake to Water-lily Bay. The gloomy one smiled a ruinous smile, and 'dooted what mak o' a day it was gauin to be.' However, Water-lily Bay was more delicious than I can tell. It is so marvellous with quiet morning light upon it. The water-lilies have all but disappeared:

some day they will be legendary, and people will inquire into the derivation of the name. I climbed Causey; plenty of blaeberrys at the top, especially upon his blessed old nose: I had a great feed. The whole country was dim but visible; the heat intense. And so to Sale and Eel Craggs and Grasmoor. Here I got into mist. Then back to the stream that 'gaes doon' between Grasmoor and Eel Craggs, a bonny beck, if there be a bonny. I bathed in it; such a bath, a little fall swishing under me and over me and all about me, and seething and bubbling up like soda-water.

After tea (such a glorious apple-*tart*—think of that, if you please; none of your 'obvious vulgar' plums, but apples rich and melting and shrined in the crust of Todd; cream too, and delights manifold!) took a 'bawt' and rowed myself to Water-lily Bay; nearly dark; let myself drift out from the bay, while I lay in the stern, and dragged my right foot through the all but warm water. Moon very sulky, and hardly perceptible.

TO J. C. TARVER.

CLIFTON,

November 21, 1889.

I accept your offer eagerly. You will receive my Rabelais (first volume, you don't want the second?) by next post. Whereupon duly forward to me the Flauberts: it will indeed be a splendid exchange. I take it this portrait must be the authentic one: it is the good old critical rule to prefer the less obvious *lectio*. It is disgustingly easy to imagine how that

Jack-Pudding came to be accepted as Rabelais. So let us lean *dans ce sens*. A handsome face, if ever there was one. I still lend books: my Sand is always in great request. I can't help laughing when ladies come into my study, and stare with all their eyes, and would like to take this, and would like to take that romance of the soft-hearted old virago. They remind one of a situation in *The Country Wife*, which I doubt not you will recall.

Your letters are ever welcome; they serve to remind me that there is still such a thing as literature.

The *Faust* has engaged me a good deal. Last holidays I was to meet an old Goethean friend of mine; so went over the first part several times with much care. Conceive my disgust when I found my friend absolutely declined noticing the first part, being completely absorbed in the second.

Byron turns up again on my table. What a thing that *Vision of Judgment* is! The power is stupendous. For the *Corsair*, *Giaour*, &c., I am sorry to find them so hard to construe! They really are. Now send round 'thim' Flauberts!

TO MRS. WILLIAMSON.

FALCON'S NEST, PORT ERIN,

April 16 (No year: ? 1890).

Grey and grim, for the most part, is our 'little eilan'; but just at this moment I can look out upon a bright blue sea. The wind is blowing off the land,

the bay therefore quite smooth, except for the blessed little wrinkles that get stronger and darker to about the middle distance, when the real state of affairs is manifested in the shape of breakers and general commotion. . . . I want to dream, also occasionally to dine. I hope to get some food, moreover, that's not of this Manx earth, or any other earth, some fruit that does not grow in these cabbage gardens. But, if this is to be, I must live a suspended life, and not know what people are talking about. The 'unknown tongues' of gulls and larks will blend very well with my mood; in fact, help materially to fill up the wind-bag of temporary torpor. At Braddan the other day I heard rooks and robins; the row made by the former was quite dreadful. I used to like it, and even expect it with pleasure, and purposely visit Braddan when 'the row' was on, in spring-time. However, certain robins, evidently perceiving that I was troubled, came and got up quite a little chorus, perched on the trees just over the grave. I never before heard such enthusiastic robins. Their keen little pipes cut right through the sawdust brawling of the rooks, scattered it like 'the rear of darkness,' made it inaudible. And they were such 'boul' little beggars, so confident and confidential. . . . Tell me about Oatlands. Some people once lived there whom D., or perhaps D. and you, once went to stay with. . . . What I was musing as I passed the place was the relief, escape, or what you will, that D. particularly must have felt in getting away there for a while, the imping of young wings, the expansion, and the further outlook, the introduction to ways and ideas

unfamiliar, the disappointment perhaps, and the falling back on Braddan manners and prejudices and homely limitations. For, in those days, if some one gave us a glimpse of what was called the world, we were apt to say to ourselves, 'Is this all?' and revert to our old Vicarage views, the impossibilities and the marvels, *Waverley* and the poets, and all the great dreamers of dreams, 'Old John' in fact. How well I remember my efforts (but why say *effort*?) to convert Braddan Churchyard into that of Stoke Pogis, and to think of it as the fitting scene of Gray's *Elegy*! Yet, poor Gray! what would he have made of it? A good deal, I dare say, for did he not understand and love Keswick?

Yesterday, at the Kerroo-Kiel, I met a delightfully bright and witty man. He soon got to know who I was, and we had the most glorious talk. The mischief of it is that these worthies are only too glad to get into a *coosh* with you, and they would talk all day, leaving a spade, or forsaking plough and horses to lean over a hedge, leaning on something at any rate, and talking away. Their talk is bright, aimless rambling, not without dives into the depths, and pokes into your personality, above all, *engouement* the most absolute, and desire of inter-communication the most insatiable. And you are up on the mountain-side at the furthest limit of plough range, and the wind whistles just the right sort of accompaniment to such talk. I think I must have a sail here. But, do you know? the Manx seamen and fishermen tend to become self-conscious: the 'strangers' are spoiling them. Not so the farmer: of course no one can make him

understand that the visitors do him any good by raising the prices of his produce, so he cares very little about them, and in no way guides himself according to them or their fashions. So far as the outer world comes to him, it is by the channel of the newspapers. He has all the boundless curiosity, the thirst for knowledge miscellaneous, pulpy, and piquant, which characterize those that dwell remote. When he gets hold of you, he flies at you, hugs you, gets every blessed thing he can out of you. 'Favourable specimens,' you will say. That is true: but as regards the independence and primitive state of mind, what I say applies to almost all. You see you must get down beneath the gentleman or would-be gentleman-farmer, down to the man who never conceived the idea of ruffling it with gentlefolk. Also, you must not go down to the mere labourer. But they are desperate gossips, gossips not so much in matters local and insular, as in matters universal. The gossiping tone does proceed into the universal, does it not? The hilarity with which they will range the far horizons of thought is so childlike (you know how children are about that); a chatter that sparkles on the surface like their own *divers*, and then, with an 'Aw bless me sowl,' or 'Aye, man, aye,' down into the deepest soundings of the spirit. I think it is this quality of theirs that the Methodists get hold of, and 'lead them captive at their will.' Light, happy, irresponsible creatures of the element! In a poem of mine which I complain has not been appreciated as it ought to be (!), 'Kitty of the Skerragh Vane,' I have tried to give some idea of them. 'Nicky' is the man's name.



Have you read it? His delight in foregathering with 'strangers' is the *motif*. . . . I hope you get out. From Port Iern to Cardiff 'is a far cry to Loch Awe'! My gough! yandhar sea! I must be out upon it.

TO J. E. PEARSON.

FALCON'S NEST, PORT ERIN, ISLE OF MAN,

*April 23, 1890.*

Nay, by all the gods you shall not carry it off thus! My Amphitrite with the sweet young face and laughing eyes, and your ditch-bred Bridgwater drab! . . . And my darling outside there, that tells me all, gives me all, and is in such a mood now, a creature of moods, I will admit; but you must know how to meet her, and her whispers! Pearson, her whispers! Go to!

But getting rid of salt water, and turning inland—for example, at Holford, is it? Ah, at Holford! Well, that is a dear little place. To go up on to the hills from there by a long row of aged beech-trees—very good. You don't come upon the beech-trees at once: they lie just above Alfoxden—really delightful old things. The Alfoxden stream is, I think, poor, and it seems ashamed of itself, lurking in secret places. The people all about I like very much. I wonder what you think. Have you been to Kilve Church, and have you yet solved the question of the weather-cock? The question is simply categorical—*is* there a weather-cock?

You have one blessing—you are alone: at least,

I think I can infer that. Now I cannot be that. I have been called upon by the local clergy! Match me that, if you please!

A story and an idyll, both of the slenderest kind. I was told them by Christian, one of my crew, the other day.

(1) Coming home from Shetland; twenty boats sheltering somewhere about *Raasay*(?), I think: Inver the place is called—in the Hebrides, is it? or on the coast of Sutherland (*Dieu le sait*). A great castle with a flag: a great lady invites all the Manxmen to dinner (I wish you could have heard Christian; Invaw, he said, not Inver, and dinnāw). Fancy—120 men and boys! *She had been in the Isle of Man, and the people was very kind to her* (haw). Hence the invitation. *A ter'ble grand place, and the three-legs-of-Man cut in a stone over the door* (dooaw). They accepted: the day came, the 'dinnaw' was all ready; but not a man went.

*They were that shy* (shoy). Woodward, my sailing-master, chimes in—'An' that's the wuss of the Manx! *shoy*, that's it, aw *shoy* tremenjis! they can't help it, no!' 'Dinnaw' waits, the pipers are impatient, but no Manxmen. 'Was it your clothes?' said I. 'Well, I can't azackly say; no, hardly that either (ithaw): just *shoy*.' Great lady disappointed, but excellent and ingenious, invites them to tea; accepted; time comes, 'not a sowl went, just one looking at the other (othaw).' Wind changes, up anchor, and away to the south. Two boats remain, and at long last the 'great lady' triumphs. These men went to tea at the castle. The area of mutual

criticism being reduced to such dimensions, they plucked up courage and went, and 'enjoyed theerselves uncommon! aw a ter'ble gran lady.' The area &c. explanation was mine: they accepted it. Heaven knows in what Anglo-Keltic form I put it! You must 'let imagination muse' the delicacy of such an achievement—the delicacy, and the daring, let me say:—

O wasn't she a ladie, a ladie, a ladie,

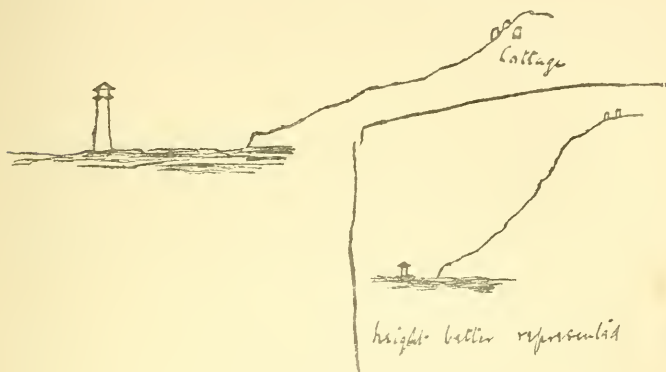
O wasn't she a ladie, that dame of Inver Bay?

I wish I knew who she was. I think I would write to her, and thank her, and apologize to her for my countrymen. She might have been the Duchess of Sutherland, whose mother, Mrs. Mackenzie, quartered the Manx arms on her shield; but then (almost all) the great Highland families do that.

(2) The idyll—it is hardly that, though. The Chickens Light-house lies off the island called the Calf of Man, due SW. From the shore of the Calf a long slope runs up to the crest of the island: this slope exactly faces the Chickens. Near the top of the slope, nestling under the crags of the crest, are the cottages inhabited by the families of the light-keepers, their doors opening out right toward the Chickens far down below them.

Now the light-keepers are absolutely separated from their families for three months at a time. But—and here is the point—these good fellows have of course a powerful telescope, and they solace themselves with looking through it at their children *playing* in front of the cottage doors. Isn't that beautiful? Ah, human hearts! Fancy on Sundays

(Sabbath—they are Scotchmen), how proud the mothers must be *to hae the bairns braw for the guid-man to see them through the spying-glass!* 'Gie little Kate her button gown, and Jock his Sunday coat'—isn't that it? Though there's no baillie's wife to tell that 'Colin's in the toon'; and indeed he is not, he is exiled out on the Chickens.



LIGHTHOUSE.

There now, have I moved you at all? Such things one picks up here, and, with a little more trustfulness and godly sincerity, and man-to-manness, a little more reach and wholesome native *ὀρεξίς*, a little more *love*, in short, how much more one might pick up! And is not *pick up* a most damnable phrase? and ought not the appetite for these things and the perception of them to be *normal*, and is not *normal* a damnable phrase, for which it were well to substitute 'our daily bread'? And so committing you both to Him who

gives that bread to all who believe in Him faithfully, I remain, &c.

PS.—I fear there is a tone of truculence in this letter. I did not mean it. You have a sweet covert there. Bless you in your Quantock rambles!

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

CLIFTON,

May 8, 1891.

The Isle was very good. Of primroses not a superabundance, of gorse great store, though meditating greater: of solitude *foison*. The glens were delicious, caught just in the act—the lovely things! I went to Renass, Ballaglass, and twice to Glen Aldhyn.

It was hard to keep out of the tubs. By-the-bye, you have never been up Glen Aldhyn: and, indeed, I have not known it long thoroughly. Glen May too I visited, and, of course, Sulby Glen. Dora is there still, enchanted, spell-bound. She is like me, would never care to come away: why should we? The world does not want us: why should we want the world? But, indeed, I do not, nor ever did.

*Arriдет tibi Coryletum?*<sup>1</sup> I think it does, and that you must be very happy.

<sup>1</sup> Hazlemere, as T. E. B. spelt it.—H. G. D.

TO MISS E. BROWN.

CLIFTON,

*June 22, 1891.*

I write just a line to tell you that we have heard of the death of your uncle. The dear gallant old fellow has gone. . . . He was a noble, brave, and absolutely honest man. I have not seen him now for nearly forty years. . . . When he left England I was a youngster at Oxford, and had only just become engaged. So all things pass, and the world goes on. Aunt M. has now only one brother. Of the six boys that once grew up in old Braddan Vicarage I am the only one remaining. Ah! it does feel lonely. But you are with me still, and I am not unhappy. Thank God for all!

TO J. E. PEARSON.

KESWICK,

*September 12, 1891.*

When your letter came, I was in the Isle of Man, and my last two days were so quiet that I wanted never to leave the place again. I wonder whether Wilson would give me something just to clear out at once. Then would I make haste and flee!

Yet this too is lovely, this lake with its divine monotony, these sphynxes of mountains with their ridiculous questioning faces. And one day on Scawfell Pike was absolutely perfect, the kind of day you get here between storms, clear as crystal, sharp and tremulous with the rapture of the rain. . . . And now

with the fine weather crammed into one short week, we are all hurry-scurry. We hardly know what we would be at. Like the typical Englishman, we stand musing what we shall wear, and—

Sometimes we would have this,  
Sometimes we would have that,  
And sometimes we would wear,  
We cannot tell what.

So let us be off. The trap is at the door. And to-day it is to be Stake Pass, Mickleden, Rossett Gill, Angle Tarn, Grain's Gill, and Seathwaite. *Qu'en pensez-vous?* And the wretched Dakyns, who won't come, *can't*, quotha, because of VISITORS. Alas for Dakyns! what will he do in the end thereof?

Sunday. We went, we saw, we conquered. Rossett Gill *was* hot. Fancy the liquid silver near the top! How we did trinken—trinken—trinken! Our tea at Seathwaite was untellable. This is desperately sensual, but what would you have? The tubs in Grain's Gill: would you have those? I swear to you that no Roman bath ever approached them even in mechanical perfection. We swore deeply (girls and all) that we would come up here on Tuesday and bathe. Hugh and I would constitute ourselves sentries. Besides, the place is a very solitary one, and the tripper is nearly extinct for this season.

With kindest regards to Mrs. Pearson I will now close this letter; the last of its kind which I shall probably write this side Jordan. It is good that we should have written to each other—'very meet, right, and our bounden duty,' in a very true sense, 'sacramental.'



TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

LAKE VIEW, KESWICK,

*September 12, 1891.*

. . . . .  
I have been to the Isle of Man with Hall Caine. Two days, the only fine ones, were very great. One of them was a Sunday: A.M. up Glen Aldhyn: P.M. to Kirk Maughold Church. A.M. was natural; P.M., shall I say, spiritual? Well, social, of the very highest order. The vicar is an old friend, the vicar's wife perhaps my very oldest friend. We went to the evening service, and I read the prayers. At the altar-place knelt . . . it was the church where we were married.

Charming with all the consummate charm of well-nigh eighty years worn with exquisite grace heightened by every circumstance of refinement and the halo of a beauty not yet extinct, the subtlety of an intellect still active in many directions—such is Mrs. White, more familiar to me by her maiden name. The mere physical conditions were little short of astounding. A line drawn from the altar of the church straight down the aisle and projected westward would have lighted on the other altar, that of Barrule, black, pyramidal. Venus was rising over the cairn on the top of Maughold Head. The dear old vicar crooned away his most admirable sermon, of which I heard not a word, but was conscious as of a lullaby. And so they go on, these most blessed of the blest. Time touches them lightly; they are so precious that I

suppose they will at last not die, but fade away into balsams like Mizraim, sweet mummy powders of finest fragrance.

My girls are all well and happy. Dora is really getting a *great* girl, though I say it. And much of all this happiness is reflected upon me. But, my dear Worthington, there is a happiness, a kind of happiness, a *kind* (do I claim too much for it? just a *kind*) which I shall never know again—ah no! so help me God!

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

LAKE VIEW, KESWICK,

September 12, 1891.

Hall Caine was with me in the Isle of Man. I took him up to Kirk Maughold on Sunday evening. The whole thing was unparalleled. I read the service. My dear old friend the vicar preached. His voice was sweet and soothing. I don't know what he said, probably it was his very best. I sat within the rails and saw nothing but one precious thing. . . . Dear old friend, preach away, and let it be your best, if you think it should be so, but I must hear words far different, and seek the higher absorption. I should like to tell you more of this wonderful day.

On Monday we had to leave for Whitehaven at 11. So we breakfasted at 6, and had a car to Ballaglass. This too was a sacrament, but more open. I enclose two 'lil pomes' from 'In the Coach.'

TO A. M. WORTHINGTON.

CLIFTON,

April 5, 1892.

Φίλτατε

ὁτοτοῖ, ὁτοτοῖ, ὁτοτοῖ, likewise ξ, ξ, ξ!

Then you don't know that I have been nearly 'kilt<sup>1</sup>.' *Proximus vidi*, I can assure you: and even now my case is dismal. Walk on Dartmoor! This morning I crawled to the sea-walls and back, and made my poor boast of the achievement. Ah, Worthington honey! Worthington avick! I believe it is all up with me. I may go for a few years more yet, but the mainspring has been rudely shaken, and I shall be a simulacrum, an approximation to the manes and lemures of fable.

And still I would fain meet you again, and 'Coll. . . .' too, and try to put in my sword where such men foin and fence.

How infinite a walk on Dartmoor seems! not so much in physical space as moral. Suppose I did walk all over Dartmoor now, could it be the Dartmoor of old! a dream of heaven and all that is elastic and tense and free—no, no! just mile-stones and dragging limbs, and eyes vainly seeking the old light.

Well, and the upshot is that I am seeking it to-morrow, not vainly, let us hope, with Dakyns. I was at Weston a fortnight, and it did me very little good. So now for Haslemere, possibly further, if I get on a bit, and can persuade Dakyns to cross the Channel. I have thought too of a trip to Naples by

<sup>1</sup> He had been seriously ill at the end of 1891, and took long to recover his strength.

an Orient steamer. They call at Plymouth, don't they? If I make Plymouth my port of embarkation, will you take me in for a night and a day? . . . .

And now you behold the situation. Dear, kind friend, be sure of my constant affection.

TO MRS. WILLIAMSON.

16 WINDSOR VILLAS, NORTH RAMSEY,

*May 13, 1892.*

I wrote to you last from Weston, but the place did me little good, so I left it, and two days afterwards repaired to Haslemere in Surrey, to my old friend Dakyns.

This is a delightful place, so perfectly quiet. I was upon a hill 600 or 700 feet high, commanding a glorious view, a real Poussin, only English to its utmost marge, the greater part of Surrey, Kent, and Sussex. You will know it as Tennyson's place. It lies mainly on the borders of these counties and Hampshire. The lines of the North Downs melt here into those of the South Downs in such a way that W. you have nothing but hills, E. and S. the Weald, as it is called, fringed by the furthest South Downs and the sea. Dakyns' house is on the hill called Greyswood, Tennyson's on Black Down, and Tindal (poor flighty mortal!) has enthroned himself on Hind Head.

Hind Head is 900 feet high. It is a delicious paradise both of form and colour, heather, bilberry, larch, birch, and such a bold leonine attitude—quite ridiculous for such a hill, but you submit yourself willingly to the illusion. Black Down is chiefly heather—mag-

nificent heather, mind! Greyswood is largely built upon, but still there is a remnant of the old common, a lovely little wilderness of gorse, birch, bilberry, and heather. The heather is of the three kinds, ling, heath, and cob heather (the two last perhaps better distinguished as crimson bell and bog heather).

Well, here I soon became very happy, and everything that the most unfailing and unstinted kindness could do was done for me. I got so much better during the three weeks I stayed there that I was able to travel by myself to Liverpool, and next day to cross to the Island.

Before leaving Haslemere, I climbed Hind Head three times, the last time walking by myself, and shouting for *lonely* joy! . . . When I have climbed Barrule, I shall think it time to return to Clifton.

You know that I am giving up my house and mastership. Where to live? That is the question. . . . Much musing and meditating I find myself drawn mainly to this Island; and you must not be surprised if you hear of my settling down to spend my old days in Mannin Veg Veen. . . .

TO J. R. MOZLEY.

CLIFTON,

June 27, 1892.

Dakyns and wife have departed. They stayed two days with me and two days with Glazebrook. He discharged his difficult task admirably—a really beautiful speech<sup>1</sup>, conceived in the best taste, the tone sustained throughout. It was highly eulogistic, but I must not

<sup>1</sup> At 'Commemoration.'

say anything about or *against* that. They 'drowned me in a bowl,' i. e. presented me with a silver vessel, in which you could baptize a baby by immersion.

TO MISS E. BROWN.

CLIFTON,

July 2, 1892.

The day is glorious, though overwhelmed by such memories. Forgive me that I could not lay the ghost when we parted. After all it was of you I thought, and what you must feel, leaving your birth-place and the scene of so many joys and sorrows, seeing it for the very last time as your home on earth. Woe is me! But it is inevitable, and in a few weeks' time we shall all have flown from the old nest. To-day I have given up my school work for the remainder of the Term. . . . We are eagerly looking forward to your letter. . . . Mind you give yourself a fair chance of success, i. e. by carefully attending to your own health, and trying no experiments in the way of diet or abstinence. God bless you.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

WINDSOR MOUNT, NORTH RAMSEY,

September 18, 1892.

How the wind howls! It has now been at it for some three weeks, and there is no sign of a change. That is the Manx climate. I remember when I never noticed it; but long familiarity with the effeminate skies of England has made me sensitive. O for a bit of the primitive hardihood! the capacity of roughing it! A good thing, sir, a good thing and (an!) useful.

I have been throwing out my social *tentacula*. Called on the bishop, who has returned the call; but 'we were both out' has rather an Irish flavour. Old friends come in and we shall have much ado to keep pace with the genial folk. Meantime it is very hard to say what time I shall find for reading or writing. I do both write and read, but not overmuch. I read Swift, and I have written for the *National Observer* a review of Burgon's life. Many of my friends are old ladies, and they value my society at their whist-tables; and I am, as you know, very good-natured—so—what would you have? A charming Hibernian called on me the other day. Portentous! alarming! He had been sent from Douglas by some evil-disposed friends of mine there, to consult me as the supreme authority on matters Manx. Now of this language I am, if not wholly, yet at least grammatically, ignorant. He was a tall, stalwart fellow, black-bearded, not handsome, but with a tremendously Irish face, eyes of fire, nose of peremptory interrogation. Flourishing a wretched grammar in one hand, he proceeded rapidly to demonstrate its ineptness, and sternly to demand my explanation. As my weak-kneedness grew more painfully evident—

So scented the grim feature, and upturned  
His nostril wide into the murky air,  
Sagacious of his quarry—

he almost shouted with exultation. All the Manx scholars had completely failed—here was another. 'Glory be to God! I'll smite him hip and thigh.' He was a splendid Irishman, and, of course, kind and generous. He didn't spare me, *destructured* me utterly,



but speedily constructed me upon new lines, and told me a lot about Celtic difficulties and how to overcome them. He spoke Irish like a bird, and after about three-quarters of an hour, he rushed forth to catch the train, hairy, immense, with some wild wirrasthu of farewell. Imagine a very learned and linguistic Mulligan of Ballymulligan! I duly received your kind verses, *apposui lucro*. I really know not how on earth it is that I get such proofs of esteem and affection. Positively I am inclined to echo the redoubtable M. and express concern at the discovery that men like me. His predicating the reciprocity as being all on the one side I leave to him. With me the reciprocity is full to overflowing.

I went from Devonport to Rhayader, meeting there my sister and her husband. The people don't speak the Cymric much, but they are so Welsh, so unpractical, in many ways so charming. No trippers, not even tourists—a perfect cessation of the enemy, a cessation of all enemies, except, perhaps, the tippling of the natives; but there, I am no great enemy of tippling. It is true they lie down drunk in the streets, but they look so rosy and altogether comely in their honest cups; and besides, I am such a poor sleeper, that I envy any one sound sleep wherever indulged and however induced.

TO G. H. WOLLASTON.

WINDSOR MOUNT, NORTH RAMSEY,

September 25, 1892.

How good of you to write to me from Baireuth! It was a most enjoyable letter; no good, though, my

attempting to answer it until you come to your point of repose. Now you are all right, and I take a shot at you sitting.

By-the-bye, you are just before me at this moment, i.e. Elliot and Fry's version; and a very fine version it is too, and much admiration it has excited in the bosoms of many fair dames of the Isle. You are, in short (really at considerable length), upon my mantel-piece.

I see *Parsifal* is the only work next year: it is the last year for Baireuth to have undivided possession of this glorious thing, so they are going to have plenty of it. May I be there! not an entire impossibility. Will you and Mrs. Wollaston be there? But this is too large an order for human foresight, so—drop it!

O Wollaston, the delight of this leisure! I read, I write, I play. Good gracious! I shouldn't wonder if my music came to something yet. I have actually gone back to singing, a vice of my youth. Don't mention it at Clifton! I always think the sea the great challenger and promoter of song. Even the mountain is not the same thing. There may always be some d—d fool or another behind a rock. But the sea is open, and you can tell when you are alone, and the dear old chap is so confidential: I will trust him with my secret.

How about Devon? was it good? Did you all bathe and 'rux' yourselves well about in the brine? I have not done much in that way: the storms have been so furious—unkind of them, eh? Well, I fancy it is like the boisterous welcome of some great dog—

at least, I take it in that sense. And the old boy is so strong, and he doesn't know, he thinks I am what I used to be. But I'm not: and every now and then he remembers that, and creeps to my feet so fawningly.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Wollaston, to Althea, and all of them.

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

WINDSOR MOUNT, RAMSEY,

November 5, 1892.

You ask me to tell you how the days go. Well, I must confess that so far they have been mainly devoted to the re-establishment of my health. In this I have been fairly, but not triumphantly, successful. I breakfast at 8.30, and the sea is my companion for a good three hours. I walk simply on the shore, and as near as possible to the water's edge; I walk, save for the dear old chum aforesaid, alone. I lunch at 1.30, having had a short interval of reading. This reading is Iddesleian: no method, very delightful. However, what with this brief space and an hour or two besides scattered through the day, I have read a great deal of *Don Juan*, some Swift, and some Johnson, or rather, Boswell (*Tour to the Hebrides*). I have also preached twice, once at King William's College (my old school), and once at Maughold. The last occasion was a thing wonderful to relate. It was at night, last Sunday night, magnificent moon, sea all 'glory, honour, and power.' Barrule black as jet, pyramidal, unutterable. The church bursting

with fire and bright faces: entering at the west door, it looked like a tunnel of flame. The churchyard too was full, a curiously eager 'company of witnesses' glowering in upon me. I don't know how to describe it, except by saying that it gave one the idea of a Cyclopiian spiritual smithy, of which I myself was the smith, and the good old parson the bellows-blower. Out flew the sparks, and these blessed old Kelts caught them in their fine raptured faces as children do looking in upon the smitten anvil. The church was decorated for a Harvest Thanksgiving. 'Go it!' and so I did, with much satisfaction to myself, possibly to others.

To-morrow I preach (Harvest Thanksgiving—late is it not?) at Ballaugh. That is a tamer place, but hallowed to me by certain recollections, and I suspect I shall be much moved. What egotism all this is! Pray, forgive!

I have been to Government House, dined, and slept there, on Thursday last.

I took —— in to dinner. She talked beautifully, and without the shadow of affectation, and talked so fluently, and so intelligently. . . .

For music, imagine *me*, choragus, virtuoso insignissimo—here again I fancy I hear something of a titter. Silence, sir! One of the phenomena of this leisure is the recrudescence of my music. Of course it is favoured by the *medium*. The company were quite willing to be pleased—commended me heartily. That is something worth living for. I must off to my sermon.

## TO CANON RAWNSLEY.

RAMSEY, ISLE OF MAN,

*November 18, 1892.*

Will you kindly send me all useful information about the 'Footpaths Defence Association'? All papers thereanent would be received gratefully. How about the 'Lakes' in particular? Is that a special thing? Hints as to the best way of setting about the same business here would be very welcome. Some brief digest of the actual Law of Trespass would come in nicely. Leaflets various, especially any from your own trenchant pen, would quite set me up.

[Canon Rawnsley elsewhere quotes a saying of Mr. Brown's: 'the meanest thing a man can do is to shut up a footpath.']

## TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*November 18, 1892.*

You are now within measurable distance of the Christmas holidays, after, I hope, a prosperous and happy Term. I don't often get beyond the shore, it is so clean and sparkling with gravel and foam-edge. Yesterday, it is true, I went up a glen just to meet a genuine mountain stream, which rewarded me with some fine ferns quite fresh and young. A thick fog-bank lay out at sea: you were blotted out, sir, absolutely obliterated, you and your island! i.e. geographically and visually: but I thought of you all the more.

Of literature I partake as follows. Mozley has

been over, and I found that he had never disused the energy of 'Repetition<sup>1</sup>.' At the same time I had been led, I hardly know how, to cultivate this path or byway of letters ever since I came over here. Comparing notes we discovered, to our great joy, that our memories were as strong as ever, our appetite keen, and power of retention quite unimpaired. Isn't that good? Really it provides for the whole of my future life, and the close sympathy between men who squat down upon this common field of flowers is most comforting. Nothing tends to make the mind more open and cheerful. There is something about it of 'the discipline,' but we lay it gently on our shoulders. Then the realization of power is refreshing: very satisfactory too is the sensation of stowage. Idleness and emptiness are banished, and it is with a good packet of sound and wholesome stuff that I hope to stagger up at last to St. Peter's wicket. Ten lines a day—but, bless my soul! don't let us think of it in that way.

So far I've been lining the chambers with English: but, as I find greater facility, I hope to add Latin and Greek. One charming exercise is the alternation of *Par. Lost* with old Ballads. The Milton comes on rather heavily as yet, but under the Ballads I bound and curvet. It is marvellous what things and tones come out in the Milton as you treat it in this fashion. False notes too, unexpected *lapsus*—the glorious old boy! But, O Irwin! the leisure of it! the leisure of it! This is at last life. Yes, they *were* great, and we—well, never mind! . . .

<sup>1</sup> The learning of poetry by heart.

I have made the acquaintance of the Governor. I called and left a card, and immediately received an invitation to dinner. His Excellency met me himself with his dog-cart. It was very nice, and I slept there (not in the dog-cart!). He is distinctly a literary person; and so is his wife. The party was rather big and tremendous, but at breakfast next morning we were more by ourselves, and the talk was pleasant.

They introduced me to some American writers whom I had not seen, but, on the other hand, I had the honour of introducing them to *Tom Sawyer*. The Governor has a fair library ('closet of books'). It was amusing to note how he caught at my Boswell (*Tour*), which I had taken with me to read by the way. The binding rather amazed him. *He supposed I hadn't all my books bound in that way, but a few of my darlings!*

I like other things here, the knitting again of old connexions, the familiar intercourse with the old folk, the impinging of old tones upon the ear of desuetude; but at the same time it is not without a distinct thrill of pleasure that I enter once more into the easy conventions of polite society—*easy*, mind! for these people are easy with the ease that has some depth of root. Yet the Governor is an out-and-out Radical! and here I am, locally, a Conservative. But what utter bosh it all is! Of course I am embedded in Conservative surroundings, steeped to the throat in the finest and most richly conserved juices of the retrograde mind. This too is such a relief. . . .

Few men are capable of this retirement. *I* am. Now don't think me conceited: it is the simplest fact. All life hitherto has detained me from my true life.



The rebound, if not quick, is effectual, natural, inevitable. Absolutely now, and without any humbug, I could live here with nothing but a Horace.

But this affords no basis for self-complacency, I assure you. Why am I not a man of affairs, a man useful in my day and generation, 'a great man'? Wilson once put to me that home question, and I was dumb before him; I am still dumb.

One thing I feel is growing upon me, and that is egotism.

Do pardon all this talk about self, and recurrence *iterum atque iterum* to self and its weaknesses.

How are you all? There now! There's a vigorous and rather *naïf* effort to get out of myself. For instance, how is N.? Is he going to get married? Don't let him do so on any account. He is a most consummate bachelor, trim, neat, in mind and body: don't let him be divided into parts, or dissipated in domestic mince. I would have him always *τετράγωνος*, and ready for celibate activities. If he by any chance should be seduced from his allegiance to the laurel, I shall expect a complaint from the Queen whose service he will have deserted.

Then up and spak the Queen of Fairies,  
Out of a bush of broom,  
'She that has borrowed the young N.  
Has gotten a bonnie groom.'

Then up and spak the Queen of Fairies,  
Out of a bush of rye,  
'She's ta'en awa' the [nobbist] knight  
In a' my companye.'

... What a ripper Birkbeck<sup>1</sup> is! He is almost too

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Birkbeck Hill, editor of Boswell's *Johnson*.

exhaustive; keeps you 'annotated' to the fraction of a hair. On the contrary the big 'Pope' is, I regret to say, a failure: the notes are quite capricious in their incidence and leave you 'darkling.'

TO MISS E. BROWN.

RAMSEY,

*November 30, 1892.*

I really hope you have got into good ways of sleeping. Most nights our chimneys roar like active volcanoes. I had thought I was getting inured to this, but—fiddlededee! last night all the winds of heaven combined and brought to bear upon me a perfect battery. I didn't sleep a wink. The fun of it is that these vagabond children of Aeolus, after raving like the worst possible form of tom-cat all night, towards dawn become quite decorous and sneak away 'to their several caves,' as if butter wouldn't melt in their mouths, and, if that is not a sweet confusion of metaphors, leave it alone!

The piano has been tuned to-day by a man from L'pool, a 'ter'ble' nice young man. I played him 'Myl-y-charane,' and he played me a Cornish Florida. Fancy! these are the *agréments* of Manx life. Do you know what a Florida is? A dance tune at the Cornish Floridas; and the Cornish Florida is the May-day fête, and would seem to be the Floralia of the ancient Romans handed down from the British period. Fancy one of Smith's tuners meeting me in this intelligent and sympathetic fashion! . . .

TO MISS E. BROWN<sup>1</sup>.

RAMSEY,

*December 11, 1892.*

The blizzard extended here, and with full vigour. I was in Douglas. The snow began on Sunday morning, but we started for Kirk Braddan, I without an umbrella. It became terrific, and on Monday we awoke to a world which was past recognition. We had never thought of this; we had been befooled into the belief that it hardly ever snowed at all in the Isle of Man. I spent Saturday to Wednesday last in Braddan. As a question of interior it was delightful; of exterior, a howling waste of mud and black and white horror. . . . M. is deeply interested in Manx history and antiquities. So we got on splendidly together. Part of my mission there was to advise him upon a book he is bringing out of Manx songs, and I discovered quite a treasure. . . . At Copenhagen, in the museum, he examined the papers of an old Danish professor who died somewhere about 1750. . . . Among these papers he found a Manx song, with English translation written by Archdeacon Rutter, afterwards bishop of the island, in about 1680. It is a gem: but the English is so delicious that I can't help suspecting that it is the original. Still, the Manx is wonderful, and makes a gallant effort to express the quintessential cavalier philosophy of a poet who might have signed himself Herrick or Lovelace. Well done the 'Lil Oilan!' Fancy its producing such fruit! The Hesperides are nothing to it.

<sup>1</sup> Vide Appendix.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*December 26, 1892.*

I have read your 'Cowper' with much pleasure. It is surprising how you have found time to write two articles and the verses while the shuttle of examination has been rattling about your ears. . . .

It is useless denying that I was complacently present in the spirit at the 'plague'<sup>1</sup> and all its horrors. It was only human nature to suck the full juice of my exemption. To do this effectually I had to summon you all to the bar of my intensest realization—the masters' meetings, the lapses of temper, the lost papers, the missing marks, all the devil's own brew of bothers; and I, pipe in mouth, glass of hot toddy at my side, and not a care, except the care to get to the very depth of the ironic misery. O! I did enjoy myself. And so, having exquisitely sympathized, I now am the more prepared to be with you in the blessedness of the repose that has followed. May the gods grant you the plenary seisin of your luck.

I have been roaming: been to Peel, and seen lovely children and dear nice people. A cousin of mine gave an entertainment at her school. The little ones performed what was majestically styled a cantata; but it was only a series of nursery rhymes, arranged at random; for you are to consider that, in the evolution of such a sequence, it matters not whether 'Little Bo-peep' precede 'Little Jack Horner,' or succeed that

<sup>1</sup> Examination week.

voluptuary. Not the least interesting person was an old music-mistress, who entered into the delight of the children with a delight all her own, but wholly beautiful, dashed, too, with a flavour of aside at the grown-up members of the party. To that dear old thing I say heartily, 'God bless thee! thou art good.' Indeed I could have hugged her. 'For these and all His other mercies,' &c.: they are a great comfort to me, and one sweet unselfish old maid will set me up for a week.

Altogether it will be very hard to get me away from this perfectly bewitching place. I have a sort of hold over the people which I feel is not precarious. How fortunate it is to have had forbears! well, let us say at all, but such as mine, so good, and of good report. Don't think me egotistic! But you have no idea how the old echoes repercuss and make music of my life. One goes to see a dear old creature of eighty-one: she knows you and everything about you, everything behind you, and, if possible, before you. . . . These (the elders) are such as I would fondly hope are gathering a gentle soothing sort of gossip about me to tell the happy *majores* when they meet them in Elysium.

TO CANON RAWNSLEY.

RAMSEY,

January 10, 1893.

I'm 'shoy uncommon,' but still not as bad as 'yandhar.' 'In the Coach' (*sic*) will appear in my new volume, which Macmillan has already in hand.

What was W—— doing—blaspheming generally or specifically? He's a 'ter'ble' man. But isn't he good? and don't I love him? that's all. Thanks for the sonnet. I don't know, but some way one generally ends a letter to you like this. 'Navau thee moin, John Thomas!' But hold hard! I must not forget you're a foreigner. 'Scuse the Manx that's at me!'

Why not 'nobler,' or still better 'sweeter'? The comparative is both adjective and adverb.

Kindest wishes for this new customer.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

January 29, 1893.

The verses are most refreshing. Nothing so bright and cheerful as these winged creatures. Always send me the latest brood. I have at last got off my Macmillan parcel, and I suppose before the week's end proofs will be flying northwards. The volume begins with 'Old John,' and ends with 'At the Play,' which you may remember I wrote for you, accompanying it with a Latin translation. The translation, however, is omitted!! I am proud to say that my book will not contain a single word of translation. I had a pretty little matter enough of La Prade, but we must positively withstand this dreadful *cacoethes transferendi*.

The scene at Peel was perfectly delightful. When you get the paper you will observe some votes of thanks proposed in Manx. These are the cream of the joke. The proposers were the dearest old fellows.

They stood up in their places, and did the whole thing in perfect good faith.

The tremendous earnestness of these blessed old Kelts does not debar them from a levity which is simply ethereal and heavenly. They have such faith in one, and unbounded reverence for what they suppose to be one's 'larnin', and yet such sympathy with one's nonsense. They are indeed 'gleg at the uptak'; never miss a point, however dodgy. The princess showed her thorough breeding by the discomfort she experienced from the one crumpled rose-leaf in a bed of roses. My dear old friends discover theirs by detecting the merest suggestion of a point through all the wrinkles that I can complicate.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*February 26, 1893.*

Spring has just looked in upon us and gone. I don't know why. I for one was prepared to give her a hearty welcome. Certain crocuses of my acquaintance were of the same mind, and applauded her in their meek manner; a brace of tame hyacinths expanded into perceptible, though slightly guarded satisfaction, as becomes their quality of breeding, and she turned away in a frump; and here is the demon of the pole—a blizzard, a—— but language fails me. Besides, I can't get to church, and the withdrawal of my ordinary 'intellectual, moral, and spiritual' (Percival's old trivium) has made me cross, and this may continue.

Wherefore send me Crabbe. 'Twere a pleasant



leap from the Pisces to Cancer. . . . People talk about Crabbe, but they don't read him. Urge them to do so: likely enough you will only get them to read your article, but that will do them a lot of good; and it certainly will do me good, old Crabbian though I profess myself. . . .

'The young man that played the clarionet.'

This matter had a funny sequel. Letter from a rising Liverpool tradesman; says *he* was the 'young man,' &c. Asks for explanations and so forth: had been a pupil of mine in the Castletown Night-School. Wounded, feelings lacerated, &c. I was greatly alarmed. Issue. He *was* the 'young man,' but not the 'young man' who, after the Liverpool meeting, claimed the proud position of ex-clarionet player to your humble servant. That young man seems to have been an impostor; by comparison of dates, could not have been more than minus two years of age at the time of the clarionet performance—'a marvellous boy,' rather embryo, if ever there was. The real *ci-devant* artist is a thoroughly good fellow, a most prosperous man moreover; we have fallen on each other's necks, and the incident is closed.

TO J. C. TARVER.

RAMSEY, ISLE OF MAN,

March 10, 1893.

I am quite ashamed. Your two letters make me blush. I always keep your letters. They have so much *salt* in them that there is no fear of their keeping. But that is no reason why they should remain

unanswered. Marine salt we have here in plenty, but the Attic stuff is rather wanting. Thrice welcome therefore are your communications. You want to know how I am, and what I do. I am slowly recovering. Sometimes I seem to catch sight of the solid ultimate recovery, but it is a slow business. The Island certainly suits me. The air is delicious and strengthening. Only the winds are devilish, and sleep is hard to get.

I read much, not systematically, but in the beloved Idlesleyian fashion—desultorily. French I now never touch. What you say of Flaubert gives me qualms. Do go on, and let us have something about him.

I have been wandering through Swift a good deal. The hearty cursing in his *Tale of a Tub* goes straight to my midriff—so satisfying, the best of tonics. For absolute splendour too, commend me to his chapters about the Aeolists! Defoe is with me not seldom. The style of these men is refreshing. For narrative, it would be difficult to beat Defoe. *The History of a Cavalier* is a downright masterpiece.

A friend has lent me a lot of eighteenth-century letters stowed up in his family archives. They are entertaining, and, I think, instructive. Largely written by parsons, they go far to show that Macaulay was all wrong about the matter. These old fellows were more literary, better scholars, finer humourists than we can now boast in the Church. It is delightful to see them pelting one another with Latin, and, very occasionally, with Greek quotations. Trulliber is nowhere. Of course there were Trullibers, and, for the matter of that, there are. But for social amenity,

for polite friendship, not the less true that it was polite, my old friends stand very high indeed.

You might call this a quiet place, but I find it full of all the sins and all the frailties. I look for them, you know, turn over every stone, and expose the grubs and beetles—they are awfully interesting, the only entomology I care for.

If you are well-to-do, and tolerably stupid, nicely married, and all that, you might lie on the burning lake and tuck the blankets around you. Is there not asbestos? and why make yourself miserable?

To be well shut of schools and things scholastic is a prime bliss. But you are still in it—don't kick too much; only I am glad that there is a bit of kick left in you. So mote it be!

I hope your recent experience will not stop your writing to me. I can promise you reciprocity not altogether 'one-sided.' That reminds me of Irwin. He writes to me, and his letters are a great consolation.

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

RAMSEY,

*February 28, 1893.*

February goes out like a snow-white lamb; the sea round its neck like a blue ribbon. . . . How about primroses? You lie too high, I should suppose, for wild ones. Crocuses must now be abundant. They are so here. A stick or two of mezereon sends a shrewd thrust of spring smell (*Ḍuft*) through the borders; and Lent lilies are preparing to be gorgeous. But wild primroses—of them the faintest prognostic.

I long to be out and seeing to all this ; and soon I hope to be aiding and abetting in the most active manner.

Much delight is mine in a big box of MSS. lent me by a young Manx friend—eighteenth-century letters of his family, particularly of one member thereof. I go on from year to year as through a garden with walks and parterres and borders, all so sweet and good. The old man was a humourist, and was famed in his day as the ‘Manx Swift.’ A grand old fellow : not a Swift (!)—good gracious, no ! not so great by a thousand miles, nor so unhappy ; but perfectly sound, and most excellent company. I have just finished the box—perhaps five or six hundred letters. They all go to produce chyle for the big book<sup>1</sup>. Well, I will not say chyle, but *διάθεσις*. To attain that will be a supreme delight.

TO THE REV. H. J. WISEMAN.

RAMSEY,

*March 10, 1893.*

I was much interested in what you say about the hymn book. After all, each generation must have its turn : it is only fair that it should discharge the function as decently as possible, but with full purpose of self-assertion. I suppose we had our turn. We liked certain hymns from old associations. The associations failing, the hymns can't be liked.

The ‘school song’ I fear must keep. I have materials put away somewhere, and some day I

<sup>1</sup> *The Island Diocese.*

believe I shall tackle them. But the mood is a rare one, and becomes progressively rarer.

I am greatly deterred by the fear of imposing on you a song which might be inadequate, and which you might find distasteful, and yet be under some kind of *aldós* about rejecting.

The right song should come to the front at one stride: there should be no possibility of a mistake about it.

I fear me much, my Wiseman dear,  
That we sall come till harm.

And yet I am unwilling to hand it over to any one else. That's the sort of critters we are.

TO A. W. MOORE.

RAMSEY,

*March 12, 1893.*

For weeks and weeks I have lived in the eighteenth century up to the eyes<sup>1</sup>, and have had a delightful time. What dear old fellows!

Then the colouring—matters of postage and carriage of goods—the whole life of the time—men going to and fro, the 'Custom-horses,' the wives, &c. carried in creels across the backs of some venerable old Dobbin—the exquisite manners, warmth of friendship, combined with respect and deference.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*March 19, 1893.*

The article is very good, but I scarcely think it would hit its mark now. Shoot folly as it flies.

<sup>1</sup> Referring to some eighteenth-century letters from Manx clergy that I had lent him.—A. W. M.

Look out for another emergence: any day some such bubble may float up from the depths of the fatuous. They are astounding.

Hugh is at our gates. Passed Prawle Point on Friday, arrived Gravesend Saturday. Has gone on, I fancy, to Clifton, where he will see his sister Dora. He will next proceed Manxman, and we hope to have him here on Wednesday. Whereupon the fatted calf, &c., for this very guiltless prodigal.

B. fled from the face of our visitors. You can depict to yourself the hiatus (if a hiatus can be depicted) that separates him from the enthusiastic and ebullient X. Meantime he is on the other side of the hiatus, safe, sardonic, derisive!

How amazing is the *Review of Reviews*! I suppose you never see it. In a dreadful ancillary, i. e. scullery, back-kitcheny way, it ministers miscellaneous pabulum, on which it is not impossible to feed.

Do you see *Longman's*? If so, you are aware that Andrew Lang writes for it a sort of *causerie*, 'At the Sign of the Ship': sometimes good. Poor old Thackeray would have called it not a *causerie*, but a 'roundabout paper'; and what for no? In the number for this month there is a ramblement (that's another name that would save recourse to French) by old A. K. H. B. He calls it 'Of a Wilful Memory'; and, do you know, it seems to me quite delightful. It includes a high appreciation of Henley as a poet. There is one thing about 'language' as used by sailors that you'd like. Said a preacher, 'Ah, the fearful nouns, the appalling adjectives, and the tremendous (*sic*) verbs, one hears down at the harbour!'

And then the man who wanted St. Andrews to be prayed for. At a great prayer-meeting requests were being made that divers souls, supposed to be in evil case, should be interceded for. One arose and asked the prayers of the meeting for a little town on the east coast of Scotland, which was 'wholly given to idolatry.' Such was the expression. A little city, with many schools, also the seat of a University. Having thus mysteriously indicated the place, the excellent individual plainly felt that no mortal could possibly guess what place was meant; and putting his hand over his mouth, he said to his friends on the platform, in a hoarse whisper distinctly heard over the entire hall, 'St. Andrews!' Isn't that consummate? isn't it Scotland?

I have now hardly time left to tell you that I am finally done with the G. O. M. and his Home-Rule. The Welsh business has sickened me, and I pass over! Take me to your bosom!

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

March 31, 1893.

Of Crabbe—what shall I say? I shall never forget what I felt when I read a certain article on Crabbe. It was so patronizing, and so full of the pretence at appreciation and sympathy. You know the kind of person! N. is another of the gang. It would never do to admit their blindness; but blind they are, *non omnia possumus omnes*. One may be all sorts of admirable things, but it does not follow that one has



a right to sit down on the same sofa with Crabbe. At the same time one has to remember that the limitations imposed by homogeneous homespun don't for a moment qualify one for intimate converse with the author of the *Parish Register*. It is simply lovely to think of Burke and Fox, and how they stood related to Crabbe. They were distinctly adequate. Byron too, with all his gin-sling and democratic bosh, was fit to come within the charmed circle. I could fancy you and the old vicar in a blessed eighteenth-century parlour. If it had had for its last tenant him of Wakefield, all the better. The next occupant would surely be *Gulielmus Brown, vir nulla non donandus lauru*.

You don't put Withers' point à propos of Lucian, &c. But I am wholly with you as to Lucian and Ovid<sup>1</sup>. About Shakespeare — doubtful. I should always hesitate to attribute to Shakespeare any artistic or literary intention. The fountain is too deep, too universal, at once geyser and cataclysm. I feel sure that the humour of his citizens, in the Roman plays for instance, was not to him heightened or even qualified by the cross-sensing of the anachronism. Of course he had bona fide Elizabethan Englishmen under his hand. But I don't think he was conscious of the difference. To me it is amusing; to him *it was not (es war nicht da)*. To us it yields a flavour piquant enough; to him I am pretty confident that its presence or suggestion would have been a bore. So genuine is the outflow, so pure and vital.

<sup>1</sup> Discussion as to their use of anachronisms.

I am now not doing much, not reading, not writing, not even Rep.<sup>1</sup> The fact is I am not well, and cannot tackle anything with gusto. For a man in this state the most obviously dainty and delicate things are the only diet. Your letters, for instance (would that they were more frequent and longer), the *ravissima penna* of Dakyns, and Ethel's talk, Dora's letters too (which are perfectly charming), keep me going. The intervals I am fain to occupy with the *Eclogues*. How exquisite they are! With what perfect contentment they fill me! The sweetest utterances sure of any tongue that ever warbled or prattled, or—what did it *not*? If I get a bit more serious (this is Good Friday) I take up the *Ajax*. There too I am on safe ground. And yet—I had rather be free of all this! Out in the wilderness! unconditioned, purged of thought. That is Heaven! which reminds me that the gannets are here again—the bould birds! They do look so glorious! They fish here, but not in winter. I imagine they are on their way back from the tropics; and have just called in to have a look at our bay, which is now in fine fishing ferment. Or they may have already built their nests in the Hebrides, and intend retiring there to-night. Nothing is impossible to such ardour and keenness—ἐπιπολάζοντας. Well, hardly that; no opportunists they. I suffer much from the want of a good classical library. Constantly I find myself hampered. True, it drives me in upon my reserves, and that has its advantages.

<sup>1</sup> Repetition, 'learning poetry by heart.'

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

RAMSEY,

March 31, 1893.

The gannets are here again. Either they are on their way from equatorial regions, or they have taken a day trip from their nests in the Hebrides. To-night they will go back, 'the bould imp'rint craythurs'! They are now, however, 'divin' like the divil,' and very splendid they look. Hugh sits with me, and looks out critically: he talks of albatrosses, Cape-hens, 'and sich.' Isn't it horrible that the experience of the 'Ancient Mariner' is quite thrown away upon our youth? They fish for the birds, exult in their uncouth attempts to walk on deck, insult them, crucify them, and hang them up (like St. Peter?) with the head downwards. This means slow death by determination of blood to the head. Why they choose this miserable form of death rather than an honest crack over the skull I can hardly say, but probably in order to keep the head intact for stuffing purposes. And the 'ice-fiend' does nothing to these insensate pigs, except bring them home grunting and grumbling. . . . The other day Hugh and I went up Glen Aldhyn, and picked many primroses, also *one* blue-bell. It must be very delightful to him handling these tender things after spun-yarn and canvas. I should say the great plant here is the wild honey-suckle. It is not in flower yet, of course; but its foliage is the prettiest and most engaging of any.

A few days ago I had a great mind to bathe; why shouldn't one? Both air and water were magnifi-

cently warm; I feel certain that it would have done me good. The bay a bath of liquid silver, smooth as glass — why on earth refrain? I grant you to-day is for the gannets; but we are far too smug for noble ventures. All Ramsey would cry out upon me if I ‘sthripped.’ But I’ll not wait till June—blow’d if I do.

Ah, Dakyns, ‘good sowl!’ I can’t come to you. I would give my eyes to do so; but it may not be; it cannot be. Won’t you come and see me?

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

April 21, 1893.

Your kindness is overwhelming. But what dreadful stuff the book contains! Not that I agree with the general run of my critics, who are favourable, but make the most ludicrous blunders. Surely it is ridiculous for the *Speaker* to say that ‘all the long poems are unsuccessful except the “Epistola ad Dakyns.”’ That is really preposterous. But the inequality—there of course *do manus*. Mixed pickles! mixed pickles!

Here cauliflowers salute the various ken,  
And there the pungent pods of far Cayenne,  
With embryo walnuts, gherkins at the breast,  
And the squab onion soothes the humbler taste.

*Aliter.*

For here are cauliflowers of crispy severance,  
And pods of far Cayenne to warm his Reverence,  
Walnuts and gherkins; and lest C. P.<sup>1</sup> grumble,  
Onions to soothe a taste legitimate though humble.

<sup>1</sup> Pl. interpp. referunt ad Paedagogum quendam eius aevi, ex

Tarver is here, four miles off. We see a good deal of him.

I am planning another blank verse story. I think 'Bella Gorry' was rather good, and this will be by 'the Pazon,' as was 'Bella.' Indeed I have the eggs of two 'Pazon's' stories, which I may reasonably hope to hatch in due time.

Poor Symonds! how much I think of him!

TO MRS. SHENSTONE.

RAMSEY,

*April 16, 1893.*

The other day I met an old friend and pupil, and we had a long ramble about the parish of which my father and his were successively vicars. Sunshine and for the most part silence, but occasional outbursts of delightful recognition from those faithfulest of friends, the poor. How sweet it was! And then we went to the house of his aunts, two absolutely perfect old maids, living where they have always lived. It was an old haunt of mine when a child. There it is, exactly what it was! The old corner cupboards, deep, inscrutable, from whose recesses it was no hopeless speculation in those times to anticipate cakes of all sorts. Nor do they frustrate one's anticipations now. And outside struts the lineal descendant of a turkey-cock who used to frighten the life out of a trouserless

stirpe Wilsoniorum; ubi percipiat quivis latere paronomasiam (C. P. qu. d. Caepe). Inapte alium Wilsonium, olim praefectum collegii apud Cliftonienses, effodiunt Heynius et caet.—T. E. B.

urchin. The old old life—the dear old things well on to eighty, beautiful to behold, and quite wild with joy. And we told old stories, and did our best to make up for a good thirty years of interrupted converse, but did not get beyond the merest lip-rim of the full cup. And there sat a boy, now quite seventy. He used to be thought half-witted, but he claimed his share in this orgy, and proved himself a person of far-reaching memory and subtle wit. His sisters evidently looked upon him as inspired.

TO MISS D. BROWN.

RAMSEY,

*April 23, 1893.*

An excellent letter, and very welcome! It is very pleasant to hear that you are so happy, and if you can give a little happiness to others, it's not amiss, is it?

I must say I rather envy you that week in Somerset. Never was there such a spring. But what must it be in the valley of the Tone, and under the Quantocks! Even here apple, pear, and plum-trees are making a goodly show, and a certain wild cherry sets the heart a-dancing. Then the grass—why, that alone is a perfect lap of 'lugszury.' Indeed the Island blooms like a rose. Primroses make no secret of it now—they are everywhere, and begin to bring with them young blue-bells, 'ter'ble shoy,' but they'll soon get over that. I went up Sulby Glen a bit the other day: the gorse there, as elsewhere, is a mass of golden flame; and I heard the cuckoo. . . .

TO MISS E. BROWN.

RAMSEY,

*April 23, 1893.*

Behold me ! rather tired, but jolly enough, just the excuse required for not going to church, or, indeed, anywhere this glorious morning. Tarver and I walked yesterday for some seven hours. We went to Ballaglass and found it a ' mash ' of primroses, with just a sprinkling of timid little blue-bells.

Tarver about the Isle of Man is excellent. He is no doubt a most subtle person, and knows precisely what I *want* him to feel ; but I really think he has the root of the matter in him. Fancy his going in for the Curraghs with all his heart and soul ! The Curraghs, mind ye ! think of that ! ' and him a sthraanger . . . what ? And knickerbockers arrim ! and belts all flyin' about his jacket—eh ? A *Norfolk jacket* they're callin' it ?—aye, aye ! you'll get lave though ! you'll get lave ! '

Cambridge must be lovely to look at ; but I suppose you have not yet had opportunities for making the nearer acquaintance of the bounteous English spring.

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

RAMSEY,

*April 26, 1893.*

The Island is simply glorious this marvellous weather, the spring riotous, tumultuous, unparalleled. But I often think of Haslemere and of its precious pledges. How lovely too it must be just now ! . . .



There! Borne upon 'viewless wings' the refrain of your piano. M.'s gentle yet unerring touch, or Mrs. L.'s seraphic sweep. Alas! I want that desperately. These days of 'light and gladness' are so suggestive. But 'they'll get lave.'

Ballaglass is delicious in the sunlight with the beechen spray breathing over it. Also its primroses are good, also its blue-bells. As yet the blue-bells are hesitant, or apologetic. Of course you know that later on they will attend the funeral of the primroses with a mighty mourning of hyacinthine blooms; and then they will become quite cheeky and truculent, and make the ground their own. But now the Curragh is in its absolute perfection.

I had a solitary ramble which lasted all day yesterday in Ballaugh Curragh. The bog-bean is everywhere and in extraordinary form. Do you know it? One of the loveliest, I think, of marsh plants. It insists upon growing right in the water. And the water is so still, and therefore so clear. All bog, observe, black, tremendous bog, i.e. the bottom; but what with reed and rush and flower, the Curragh, the combination of land and water, the inextricable labyrinthine twining of the two elements, is a thing marvellous to see, to smell, and indeed to hear. For the cuckoos were innumerable, and corn-crakes scraped their rasping celli with unwearied vigour. Then the feel of the air—I have tried to indicate it in 'Tommy Big Eyes'—the tactual effect of it on a skin dry and chapped with sea-salt, *drawing* the acrid crystals from the epiderm, soothing, filling up, 'making good repairs,' caulking, renovating.

I wrote to you about Symonds in rather slipshod fashion, yet I can't say I regret it. No doubt there are two points of view; and from one there would be demanded a much more critical and discriminant estimate than from the other—in fact, an *estimate*. Well, that is what I didn't care for, or intend. It will be made, I do not doubt, and by an abler hand than mine.

'By Shelley'—well, one expected that. How it would have thrilled him! The Walt Whitman I will gratefully accept *ex donis tuis*. Am I becoming a sturdy mendicant? The old institution of Patrons has ceased; but I seem to be reviving it in you! The *dedication* and the *douceur*! I did not think of this when I inscribed my book to you and M.; had I done so, you would have been in for a *plusquam* Drydenian altar, smoking with seventeenth-century incense. Love to all.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

May 11, 1893.

Pat's<sup>1</sup> sniff is lovely—'as unknown to the modern world as if it had been a classic.' Good!! good!! *very* good!!!! I shall applaud that when I lie down to-night, I shall resume my applause when the shades of— But heaven help me! isn't this a very near approach to something that Mr. Pecksniff said to Mrs. Todgers? I am losing my sense of proportion, indeed that of property. Of propriety the perception has long ago forsaken my ethics.

<sup>1</sup> Mark Pattison.

That W. W. F.<sup>1</sup> will make a perfect monograph on White of Selborne I'll lay you very heavy odds. He is just the man. Macmillan has lucid intervals!!

Wilson writes of my verses on 'Clifton': "'Clifton" is just what I have felt both for you, and in a less degree for myself.'

You can't think how I enjoy what you say about S. You cannot conceive, sir, what a *charming* figure you make! I borrow our favourite old phrase with change of epithet. I mean that you have quite unconsciously given me a picture of a very rare and exquisite bit of contemporary life, such as is indeed suggested by your own, 'an ingenious young gentleman of Cambridge.'

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

RAMSEY,

May 14, 1893.

I am very grateful to you for the Whitman. I read it through immediately, and with great interest. Moreover, I have been thinking ever since of writing a notice of some sort for the *Nat. Observer*. But whether to write ostensibly of Whitman or of Symonds I am in doubt.

My feeling is that the death of a man like Symonds is an event in the history of literature which ought not to pass without notice. So I believe I shall try.

I discovered a MS. of B.'s the other day. It is a story (prose) not finished, but not at all bad; the style, a really very good Marryatt sort of style. I think it is promising, and I told him so.

<sup>1</sup> W. Warde Fowler.

There is a strong twist of the *ροῦς πρακτικός* in it, an absence of romantic colour, a touch of Defoe ; not much humour, exceedingly clear vision of outside things, e. g. boat ropes, handling of the same, quite photographic. Altogether stuff worth examining, and decidedly interesting, with a grave sort of *entrain* that gets hold of you.

I often have dreams and longings Haslemere-ward. The *height* of your place fascinates me, that great extent of distant plain. It is a dream, is it not ? What long shoots of speculation you must have at times when you are quiet enough ! There is a pathos in a great distance, and a tenderness supervenes, or subvenes, when the distance is well and subtly filled.

The gannets are now returned in full force. I see the plunges, and hear the *thud* a few seconds after. It is electric, and beyond measure vital, and vitalizing. To-morrow, challenged by these 'divils,' I am going to begin my own aquatics ; *quod faustum !*

Hall Caine is writing his new novel ; destined, as I think, to be the very utmost *Schwung* of his tether.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

BALDRINE, LONAN, ISLE OF MAN,

May 21, 1893.

I have come here to the house of my brother-in-law for a week. Ramsey is occupied by three regiments of volunteers from the adjacent isle.

I walked over the mountains yesterday, and finished

in a labyrinth of lovely glens, imperfectly known by me. The sweetest of solitudes, each one. It is so delicious to pore over a country like this, and draw out the very soul of it. As I descended I caught sight of three great steamers advancing towards the coast. I laughed and rejoiced greatly.

I have just stumbled upon a curious literary problem. In a little biography of a member of my family who died ages ago I find that this 'amiable and pious young man' derived great benefit from a book entitled *Morning Thoughts on the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, by Mr. Cunningham, of Harrow. Now Mr. Cunningham, as, no doubt, you are aware, was an eminent Evangelical, whose name goes with those of Venn, Simeon, Newton, and so forth. The book is partly in prose and partly in verse, and no other name but that of Cunningham appears upon the title-page. But the critics of the day (so the little biography says) attributed the verse to Tom Moore. This is extremely odd. I have no life of Moore, so can't go into the matter exhaustively. The Cunningham book was published in 1824, and, just at that time, as we know from ordinary sources, cyclopaedias, &c., Tom was in difficulties through the dishonesty of his representatives in Bermuda. Consequently he may have been hard up and glad to get a job. The critics based their opinion upon internal evidence, and, if they were right, the situation is almost painfully comic—Tom Moore as Evangelical bard! A specimen is given in the biography. It is anapaestic, after the manner of 'O believe me, with all those endearing young

charms.' Dactylic, if you like; and the dear little cupid of a man gambols away quite cheerfully, and is full of a rose-buddy sort of edification, which is really quite winning.

Is it not probable that some aspiring muse in the Evangelical camp was caught by the *illecebrae* of the great Little, and resolved that the devil should not have all the good metres, as Charles Wesley refused to leave him all the good tunes? However this may be, Cupid as Seraph, rose-bud as rue, it is inconceivably rum. I observe that in my father's volume of verses, Scott is similarly pressed into the service of the—well, let us say—British and Foreign Bible Society. By-the-bye, one must not forget that Tom Moore did write 'Sound the loud Timbrel,' may the gods forgive him!

You will gather that I am much improved in health. My walk yesterday was a good twelve miles across mountains. I plucked some bell heather nicely in flower; very early, is it not? Most exquisitely lovely the walk was! Not a soul for four hours; then converse with a good old soul, who was preparing a field for planting: the happy *agricola* who, having sailed all over the world, really does know 'his own goods.' We talked of the past, the Island past, so simple of analysis for both of us. The succession of farmers, the succession of parsons, till we got back to 'that's the man that christened me.' Then we stopped and looked into each other's eyes. The cuckoo called, and down the vale I went with no vacillating step. These things strengthen one.

I found a foxglove fairly out : that, too, was early. The mountains had the midsummer smell—a wonderful concoction ; the glens perplexed me with an even more subtle aroma. Upon smells it is hard to reflect, so that I have not yet determined what it was. The glens were very full of blue-bells, and the flower of the mountain-ash, but I don't think I have got it ; no. Some divine footsteps—what ? Ah, sweet thing ! was it you ? In such valleys the sons of God might not unfitly wander, and find not a few daughters of men meet for the ineffable embrace. At any rate, heaven itself walked down the valley and lingered there, 'and deludhed me ter'ble.'

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

BALDRINE, LONAN, ISLE OF MAN,

May 21, 1893.

I have come here for a week. Ramsey is in the hands of the Philistines. Three *corps* of Lancashire and Cheshire Volunteers have encamped there. This is my brother-in-law's. It is a delicious quiet place—much rest for the sole of my feet.

I came over the mountains yesterday—walking, of course. First, the slope of North Barrule, very long pull, keeping above Glen Aldhyn on its south side. Then the heart of Snaefell, and the valley opening down to Laxey—all my *Manx Witch* business. Then glen after glen, as I descended to Baldrine, which lies just over Lerwick, at the west end of Laxey Bay. Such lovely glens ! they smelt of heaven ; so indeed did the mountains, and even more so, i. e. if heaven's



smells are more ethereal than those of earth. But the glen smell suited me perfectly. It was not so simple as the heavenly smell. Henna is more chromatic than Olympus. And yet awfully mysterious—this glen smell. It is so hard to reflect upon smells that I can't even yet make it out.

It was not the blue-bells, innumerable as they were. Was it Proserpine, with a stealthy *suffluvium* of Dis? I really do think it was a bodily presence, an aromatic person. However, I greatly rejoiced at it. I hadn't gone far until the highest power which I ever gain swooped down upon me. I mean the power of sucking out from the country its very inmost soul, and making it stand before me and smile and speak. What an ecstasy that is! I know you know it.

Gie me a canny hour at e'en,  
My arms about my dearie, O;  
And warly cares, and warly men,  
May a' gae tapsalteerie, O!

Well, that is my dearie.

O Cuckoo! shall I call thee bird,  
Or but a wandering voice?

A bird! a bird! a thousand birds! good Mr. Wordsworth. How they did sing yesterday! But no doubt the finest cuckoo business is just after dawn: when you are lying snug in bed. This was my position to-day. I had had but a poor night, and the cuckoo began. I turned over on my left side, and with the cuckoo's note, like the soft croon of some old nurse in my ear, I wandered away into dream-land. And such an odd dream.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

May 28, 1893.

A word about S.'s essay—don't you find it obscure? I get glimpses here and there that make me less forlorn; but, on the whole, 'forlorn' is the word that expresses my condition *vis-à-vis* of this youthful prophet. The style is not at all bad, too terse, perhaps, considering the subject, but I should say, as a style, marked and distinctive. But it does not make plain the thought. Don't you fancy he has found the subject rather too many for him? There is an obvious way of treating it which, of course, he would scorn.

His slap in the face of Ste. Beuve I like well enough, but it is not perhaps an overmodest thing to do. On *Salammbô* he is really very good. His notion of Flaubert's wanting 'to get away' is suggestive, wanting to 'bathe in strange delights and contemplate monstrosities that come from an unknown quarter.' 'The vision of this strange people'—that's nice. His notion of observing where authors 'show their weakness' is *naïf* and amusing; and again his cautions and reserves, as 'this would be a misleading statement,' and so on. Don't you think a course of Oxford would have done him good? It seems to me quite certain that we benefit both positively and negatively by enforced study of Greek Philosophy, but even more by the study of Greek expression. It is no mere fancy that S. would have written a better essay if he had read the *Poetics*, nor would he have reason to regret careful study of the *Ethics*. Ah, sir, that Greek stuff *penetrates*!

TO J. C. TARVER.

RAMSEY,

June 1, 1893.

The other day I was coming over the mountains from Laxey, and descended Sulby Glen. We missed a train, of course, and had tea at ——. It was a magnificent tea. The piano was open; on its desk lay *Hymns* (I think) *Ancient and Modern*.

I played, and made an infernal row. Played, then paid, and left. Immediately a tripping step behind us: we turn: 'If you please, mamma won't take anything for the tea, and hopes you will accept it.' *Mon Dieu!*

Well, we were all in a twitter of delightful confusion, and the remission of this small debt evoked a gratitude which Irish tenants might very properly emulate when let off some two-thirds of their rent. There, sir, in the dusty road, and in the presence of 'natur's silent sympathetic witnesses,' under the bright sunlight, *praesentibus* three children, a cock, and a pig, were laid the foundations of what promises to be a life-long friendship. . . . Sir, it is not every day that we attain to this level of emotion.

And so from Sulby to Mascagni. I have not heard his operas: but I have both heard and played selections from the *Cavalleria*. There has been a good deal of exaggeration about him. Mozart need not fear for his imperishable laurels; nor indeed is Verdi to be relegated to a back seat for the aggrandizement of this young baker's apprentice—wasn't he something of that sort?

I stick to 'but first the stable,' but not to 'that can't abide the lower classes<sup>1</sup>.' Throughout the poems it seems evident to me that the *wicked* way of looking at the Puritanical dodges is supposed to be repressed with difficulty. The sincerest love and respect for my dear old friend will not make this otherwise. It will *out*. You plunge into all the hot steaming medium of the old man's exertations: you sympathize, you embrace, but you really must laugh. 'Don't be angry with me!' I am no Puritan, and, by the process of the poem, am not supposed to be. The objection to 'that can't abide' is that, though it enters as a quotation from a snobbish idiot supposed, still it is not likely that any snob or any idiot would say anything so inept. I am not sure, though!

Do you know Labiche? His vaudevilles and short comedies are simply innumerable. They are also very amusing. Probability, possibility almost, are set at defiance. But from the farcical they are saved by the innate delicacy, *slightness*, if you will, of the Frenchman. I think it must be very pleasant to be with a French audience at one of these plays. One wants ethereal people about one, people who don't care a screw for anything but fun and nonsense; champagne people, if you can have champagne, if not, lemonady people, gassy, sparkling—I don't mind honest pop for that matter. Peppermint lozenges too are good, and the frequent orange has a *staying* effect like the apples of the 'Song of Songs which is Solomon's.' I would give much to hear the Français Company in

<sup>1</sup> A reference to his poem called 'Old John' in the volume with that name.

London. But even in Paris this would not quite satisfy me. I want to be about thirty-five years younger, and to sit in a ludicrously fifth-rate theatre with Jules and his beloved, and exchange with some gentle good creature or another glances of mild and melancholy hallucination, the poor, starved, hopeless *σημεία* that are born *in vacuo*, and lead to nothing. Good-bye! Take care of yourself.

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

RAMSEY,

June 8, 1893.

Come as soon as you can. It is a perilous beauty this, and who can say how long it will last? I have been bathing for a fortnight—once every day, about 11 a.m. I would fain bathe oftener, or rather, never be out of the water at all. To-morrow I begin bathing before breakfast. I am getting much stronger. . . . There is a sort of smouldering splendour this evening, the sea like glass. Heather is beginning to be conspicuous. Foxgloves are big and strong. Honey-suckle could do with some rain, but it is abundant. I have been stopped in Glen Aldhyn, but persisted in going on: threatened with a summons, I wait events! . . . A few little *pomes* have occurred to me, but I have not yet felt moved to tackle the bigger things.

I read a good deal now. Aristophanes has got hold of me. I am reading the *Birds*. It is simply a portent of vigour and health. I had never realized it before. That tremendous parabasis, "Ἀγε δὴ φύσω, &c., has made me all tremble!

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

June 27, 1893.

I send you an *English Illustrated Magazine* for July. It contains a small trifle of mine, but, much more important, you will find therein 'Mrs. O'Donnell's Report,' by the Hon. Emily Lawless. Tell me what you think of it. Surely it is delicious. What an admirable person this Miss Lawless must be! One or two of the pictures strike me as excellent. The kind of *changeling* look on the face of the young Carrowmore, who is not a Carrowmore, really haunts me.

I have the *Cliftonian*. The review is doubtless by a hand I recognize. It is extremely kind.

You pick out 'the honey-tongued quintessence of July.' I am so glad; that was the poem I had the row about. I still think that the phrase would redeem a worse copy, and evidently you agree with me. After all, what is much of our verse-making but the hunt for phrases? I don't mind owning that I have many a time constructed a whole system of little more than bosh to enshrine a *locution*! Faith! one might do worse. Again, thanks a thousand times for your review.

Your quotation from the *Orestes* reminds me of my Euripides. I have read a good deal of him lately. He really is very great; surely the *Medea* would justify Milton's liking for him. But for several days I've been off my dramatic feed, and have been browsing in the *Odyssey*. It reads so like a lovely comedy; sometimes the cloven heel of the satyr peeps out. He

must have often excited laughter, though, I dare say, a great deal would depend on the rhapsodist.

Well, and so you have had the Guthrie<sup>1</sup>. What a comfort to have it behind you! And now July is close at hand, and you are beginning to arrange about holidays. Do try and come here! I am most anxious to see you, and we can make you comfortable, 'mind ye that!' True, our dream of glory has fled; the wind is sweeping, and the rain driving. But it will be all right again, and our August and September are often delightful. Heed not for trippers! I can guarantee you against these abominations. I know several 'banks whereon the wild' tripper grows not. In fact this defensive sort of knowledge is my special gift. You shall go for days and meet no tripper. This is effected only by very subtle evasions, but they are infallible, also in me functional and inevitable.

This dreadful *Victoria* business gives us pause. What on earth is to be the next move in naval architecture? One can see by certain indications, almost unconsciously given, what a noble fellow Admiral Tryon was, evidently an awful loss. Fancy in a quarter of an hour that 'turning turtle.' One big coffin! It makes one shudder!

Hugh is still with me. I like to keep him as long as I can. Dora is in the New Forest, a scene which, methinks, must become her. Kindest regards to Miss Irwin and your sister, also to your brother Guy when next you write to him.

He has an eye  
That brother Guy!

<sup>1</sup> Commemoration Day at Clifton College.



TO MRS. SHENSTONE.

RAMSEY,

*June 30, 1893.*

The last day of a lovely June, and the roses are dying and the days shortening; and your Commemoration is over and all delights, I mean ethereal delights, have faded. The substantial joys of the ripening year are yet to come. But I can't think of them; my heart is with the roses. . . .

We have a good many people here already. They seem nice and quiet; but they alarm me by their shrewdness and knowledge of the place. Nay, they irritate me; for the other day when I went in pursuit of blaeberrys on the mountains, and even compromised myself in the most fatal manner by taking a largish basket—behold a family of some seven or eight right on in front of me triumphantly making a clean sweep where I would have sworn no one but myself could imagine the existence of blaeberrys. Oh! it was mortifying. Perhaps they were aware of me and my poor hopes, perhaps not! I was so angry that I got into a row with a native who presumed to direct me on the way. He little knew the cause of my churlishness. A bear robbed of her young is nothing to a blaeberry-picker cheated of his blaeberrys. And, remember, that to make sure of an absolutely solitary control and prime-seisin of blaeberrys, I shall have to go to a mountain twelve miles off, which is a blaeberry mountain proper, and has its name from that fact—'Slieu ny Fraghane,' Mountain of the Blaeberrys. How I should like to hear and see you trying to pronounce the Keltic syllables!

You do not say how the story goes on? And a drama, or a dramatized form of the same story? Why don't they come? I have magnificent leisure and a large appetite, which, sooth to say, I 'bear in hand' with the *Odyssey* and Boccaccio. By-the-bye the idea grows upon me that the *Odyssey* is a comedy, in fact, almost a burlesque of the *Iliad*, not a vulgar burlesque. The Greek mind could never have descended to that. But 'there's odds o' "burlesques" ' ; and I 'whiles' get glimpses of quite a celestial travesty, which I suspect is the *Odyssey*. Undoubtedly it is full of laughter. Ariosto best helps us to understand this, though I believe there is more of genuine comic vein in the *Odyssey*. You read Italian. I have a great desire to write short stories, but have no power. Couldn't you write some for me? The Italians are the veritable masters in this kind. Boccaccio almost strings me up for the effort, but the fact that he does not altogether is a proof that it is not in me. I fancy it is in you. Write six or twelve. For longer and more splendid comedy I would read Ariosto. Considering the dimensions of his stories, it is astounding how he can sit so lightly; the dainty way in which he hovers over the subject and keeps aloof in a disdainful facility of treatment is wholly admirable. We moderns are far too much in earnest, that's the mischief of us.

I don't often hear from Clifton. I am sure that I have many good friends there, but few consider it necessary to trouble me with the assurance. Still it is very pleasant to have it in black and white.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

July 2, 1893.

The youth is right or nearly so. It was no mood that season takes away or brings. My whole life is in 'Clifton<sup>1</sup>,' a life steadfastly or normally rebellious against the calling to which circumstances had compelled me. You see these boys divine the thing—bless them! And so —, a boy of boys, thought it was impatience of *routine*; really a very good, if inadequate, solution. And there let it rest, for evidently you will not take N. as fully and obviously explaining all!!

I must, however, write to W. For he is the last man in the world to whom I could apply such words as 'truculent quack.' It was deliciously characteristic of him, the magnanimity, or, at any rate, the equanimity with which he had already appropriated the jibe to himself. . . .

Your 'Sir Thomas<sup>2</sup>' is absolute. Yes, that is the *murex*; but I should be ashamed of myself. I stand abashed before the positively awful splendour of the words, 'Let the world be deceived in thee as they are in the lights of heaven.' I do not think language can be carried to a higher point than that. It is something that any one could have been, however distantly, reminded of a pearl so transcendent by my poor *murex*.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 188.

<sup>2</sup> The quotation from Sir Thomas Browne I used to illustrate T. E. B.'s 'imperial murex':

That imperial murex grain  
No carrack ever bore to Thames or Tiber.

TO H. R. KING.

RAMSEY, ISLE OF MAN,

*July 9, 1893.*

Your letter came all right, for the Isle of Man is a small place, except in the estimation of its inhabitants.

Thanks for the kind things you say about my book. It is a sort of 'lucky bag'; and people take what pleases them. Those who are kindly disposed are content to do this, and 'chuck the balance.' I fancy it *is* my last. What's the good of gleaning in such a field?

No, Sherborne would not have done a bit better, nor any place with boys! Some heavenly, cloud-cuckoo land high up in air between St. Bees and Maughold would have been about the spot. No *παῖς* nor *παιδαγωγός* should hover in that atmosphere, an *Ἐποψ*, a *ποιητής*, a *χορὸς ὀρνίθων*, at worst a Triballic bugaboo to talk gibberish; then I should have been quite happy.

The island is glorious. Ever since February we have been enjoying untold delights. The three winter months, though, were unredeemably horrible.

TO MISS D. BROWN.

RAMSEY,

*July 9, 1893.*

I think I told you of my bitter disappointment in the matter of blaeberries. Triumphant visitors had gone up before me, and swept the whole mountain-side. However, I had my revenge. I went up about a week ago, and discovered that their ravages ter-

minated at a certain point, and beyond that point I got any quantity. In fact, I was in a position to sit down quietly and pick the arm's length all round, occasionally shifting, but without rising. That is excellent blaeberry-picking. We had them stewed, a *pis-aller*, no doubt, for they ought decidedly to be in some sort of crust to get the fine pent-up flavour and bouquet of the situation. . . . Edith wouldn't touch them. . . . But it requires more than human self-control to abstain when the hot vapour curls up under the nostrils of Jove. Concentrated by crust, I verily believe even Edith would have given in.

Picking blaeberries, not eating them, is very fatiguing. They require such minute attention. And then at night, when you close your eyes, they crowd upon you, and you can't get rid of them; they haunt your sleep, i.e. if you get any sleep at all.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

July 18, 1893.

Time will run on and fetch that age of gold and Irwin which is to set me up for another winter.

My brethren are rather troublesome. My reading, and my 'Repetition,' and my writing suffer terribly; doubtless you will see the effect of all this jaw in the copy of verses which I write in response to your appeal. It appears in the *National Observer* of July 15, which accompanies this. There is a direful misprint<sup>1</sup>. Independently of this nuisance, I think

<sup>1</sup> The verses are to be found in T. E. B.'s *Collected Poems*, ed. Macmillan. The misprint was 'land-clap' for 'hand-clap.'

the verses have some power both of style and idea, though they supply no adequate *καθαρσις*. Where *can* you get it? . . .

‘The root of the matter in him.’ I should think so. To see such a man standing modestly in the crowd that surrounds the procession of authors is quite pathetic. A lay-brother of such parts, with twice the fire and twice the critical acumen that go to make the loftiest contemporary professional. The root—and from this root no flower? Don’t tell me! If it be but the flower of a noble modesty, I know none that excels it in bloom or in fragrance. . . .

What your brother says of the epic *Schwung* is so true. Still he must miss the metre<sup>1</sup>; it is true more in the *Iliad* than in the comparatively colloquial and domestic *Odyssey*. It is a support, at any rate a consolation, to sing the great rhythms to oneself as one ploughs on. The *music*, sir, the *music*!

I preached on Sunday twice at St. Matthew’s in Douglas. This is the old church of the town, now threatened by some dreadful Hausmannic proceedings. I went up to encourage these poor people to defend themselves, to keep their parish, and so forth. It was the church where I was baptized (I was going to say where I was born), and it has undergone hardly any change up to the present. This was my occasion, and suited me down to the ground. The blessed old things gathered round me, some of them waylaying me at street corners to tell me they had *been married by my father*. This is the food for souls, is it not? Now don’t laugh!

<sup>1</sup> i. e. in a prose translation.

To-day, like a donkey, I have been up picking blaeberrries on the mountains. It came on to rain, and I persevered and got a pudding, but also 'demonition' wet. So I don't feel quite right. It is no use trying to be careful. These hills demoralize me. I feel as if they couldn't and *wouldn't* harm me.

Walters did an extremely kind thing the other day. Two old things going about with an *entertainment* (!) of Recitations (really old, for I heard them 'at it' thirty-five years ago) took a letter with them from me to Walters. It was the merest chance, I thought, but I suggested that just possibly Walters might give them an evening at the College. By Jove, sir, he did give them an evening, and gave them a substantial fee, and filled their poor trembling cup of Auld-Lang-Syne with joy and thanksgiving, and dismissed them with honour, almost reeling with the intoxication of so unwonted a success, the boys giving them a mighty three-times-three which shook the welkin, and stirred amazingly the pulsation of two hearts that have long desisted from the exercise of hope.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

August 3, 1893.

By this time your troubles are over, and rest has been found for the weary soul. We expect you on Monday or Tuesday next and are eagerly looking forward.

The weather is not absolutely settled, but it gives fine splendours. To-day, for instance, is quite lovely, whether for sea or mountain.



I have just returned from the College, where I was preaching the 'Breaking-up' sermon.

PS. Just received your letter. The Edinburgh escapade (!) removes you entirely from the Liverpool route. You will come very comfortably, and very economically, by Ardrossan. Also you will be set ashore *here*, almost at my door.

Once for all. The whole of my summer happiness is staked upon this visit of yours; and all that is Brown and Brown's centres at the point of your landing here with at least a clear fortnight of sojourn. Everything on earth is postponed, is in fact praetermitted and forgotten, in presence of the one imperious necessity. We *shall* have a time!!

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*August 17, 1893.*

The emptiness of the smoking-room is quite sufficient evidence that you had a rough passage. However, all is condoned, reconciled, harmonized, 'lost in wonder, love, and praise' at Kingham. There, safe in the middle fields, you smoke the pipe of peace, and forget the watery ways. The salt evaporates from your skin, the Manx accent fades from your ear, and you are your excellent English self again!

I have finished *Tess*. It is very unsatisfactory. The last part, the part after Clare's return, is intolerable. It is also weak, just as if Hardy had been very unwell, yet forced by the serial method of publication to produce 'copy.' One observes this in the

languor of the story, combined with the cantharadine grip, or rather griping, of an occasional effort. The original impulse dies, but makes a few desperate, ineffectual kicks. Such are the Stonehenge business, and the 'black flag.' Fancy grasping at Stonehenge to heighten a situation! And how badly it is done! It surely was going out of the way to drag in the blessed old thing at all. But, when he was about it, he ought to have made a better use of the machine. Unquestionably he had an attack of influenza just at that point. I resent it enormously. A man must be either miserably out of sorts, or fearfully hard up for sensational colour, to make a snatch at Salisbury Plain. It is just like *rouge*; and that too upon a moribund face, for the story has already shown every symptom of approaching death.

The 'black flag'! Cheap, though creepy. What an end! And do you think Clare and Liza-Lu are even respectable as they crawl away—hand-in-hand, it is true, but yoked in a dismal fellowship, inevitably suggested by the expressed wish of Tess that they should marry? Notice too the vague treatment of Liza-Lu's person. I take Liza-Lu to be a sort of giant succubus, or succuba would it be?—an *ébauche* of God knows what. And these two are to continue the business. Liza-Lu is to be all that Tess ought to have been. This is the most commonplace of expedients, and never can satisfy. Liza-Lu indeed! conceived of by me as a compound of Undine, Caddy Jellyby, and a possible Doll Tearsheet! And then how abominable is the later Tess! Her first fall was nothing. But the second—— What! that fellow!

the chap that she had seen as Methodist preacher! Incredible! She couldn't. No woman could. How you detest her! Of course you do, for she is simply monstrous—a portent. And yet you liked her. Certainly I did, but not now—this is ruin indeed. Clare had told her to have recourse to his father in case of extremity. The author has slipped that in lest we should feel Clare to be guilty of criminal neglect. But he failed to perceive how terribly it aggravated the guilt of Tess. Had Tess pride? Pride! What! And this pride threw her into the arms (shall we call them arms?) of the hydra D'Urberville! And this is the Tess we knew. The fact is Hardy doesn't know his people, and, for the sake of sensational effect, he will take one of his own sweet countrywomen and drag her through all this impossible and inconsistent dirt. Don't tell me that this is the aim of a true artist. Where is your *πάθος*? Where is your *κάθαρσις*? You can't eat your cake and have your cake. The Tess of the later part is not the Tess of the earlier. You surely must have some kind of identity in order to maintain the most otiose interest in the victim. But she is gone, vanished like Iphigenia from among the flames. Something has been left behind, substituted for her; but not a deer of Dian's herd—good gracious, no! a mask of the unutterable, faeces and the fiend!

Well now, perhaps I have said enough. It will be long before I recover from this abominable book. But I am not sorry I have read it. There is a decided talent, but it is wasted. The heroine was 'condemned under an arbitrary law, not founded in nature.' That

is, *the law of chastity is not founded in nature*. Methinks a precious doctrine. But the second fall of Tess? Do you condemn it or do you not? Did she then merely break an arbitrary law? If so you can sympathize with her. But, in the name of all that is holy, I cannot and will not sympathize.

Kindest regards to Fowler<sup>1</sup>. Get him to play some Bach to you, and to show you birds.

I go to Laxey on Wednesday to lecture on all sorts of things.

TO E. RYDINGS.

RAMSEY,

*August 26, 1893.*

Many thanks for your story. It is most delightful. Why didn't you read it? Nothing could be better. If it were written out in a fair large hand, I should much like to read it in public myself. It is Manx to the marrow: all that it wants is the pronunciation, which no spelling, however phonetic, can supply: nor, indeed, can any but the native produce vocally.

The ideal method of publication would be for me to get it off by heart, and then recite it. Much is lost by having to use a MS. Think of this another time! . . .

TO E. RYDINGS.

RAMSEY,

*September 2, 1893.*

. . . Thank you very much for the kind words you spoke after my lecture<sup>2</sup>, especially for what you said

<sup>1</sup> W. Warde Fowler.

<sup>2</sup> Lecture on 'Manx Idioms.'—E. R.

on the topic of 'making fun.' I hear that the popular version of my visit to Laxey was as follows:—'Pazon Brown was praechin' on the Manx idiots. Lek enough for the Asylum—lek.' . . .

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

September 17, 1893.

Concerning *Tess*, you have not answered one point of mine, viz. that Tess could have gone to her father-in-law, and had positively been told to do so by her husband, in case of need. She deliberately preferred the Methodist blackguard. I believe Hardy introduced these directions as given by Clare (is that his name?) simply to save this wretched man from the reproach of leaving his wife in such an *impasse*. Clare was already so contemptible a creature that it wouldn't have done to add another taint of imbecility, not to say infamy.

I don't see *power* in the book, but I do note considerable beauty in parts. The women at the dairy farm, though sufficiently ridiculous about that dreadful Clare, are really admirable in their bovine (vaccine) sympathy with Tess, and their self-renunciation. Here I detect a touch of clover quite guiltless of turnip. They chew the cud of a placid grief with much sweetness. Still it is all cud-chewing, bless the wenches!

I read nothing! the Island harasses me with its loveliness, and I can't stay in the house. Also I am smoking more than I did. I have written an article,

though, in my Manx character series, which I will send you when it is printed. It is the last.

I heard one or two good stories at Braddan when I preached there (last Sunday). One was of a child at the Sunday school. 'What ought you to do on Sunday?' 'Go to church.' 'What ought you to do next?' 'Go to chapel.' Was it not precisely the story for a vicar to tell? You feel the atmosphere—what?

Your holiday has evidently been a good one, and will have done you good. The little Island may count for something; but the converse with your own kin and with Fowler in those pleasant country places must count for more. I have no brother now, and that is a sad, sad want.

#### TO AN OLD CLIFTONIAN.

RAMSEY,

*September 21, 1893.*

'You don't care for school work'—but I fear there is no choice. I demur to your statement that when you take up schoolmastering your leisure for this kind of thing will be practically gone. Not at all. If you have the root of the matter in you—and I think you have—the school work will insist upon this kind of thing as a relief. My plan always was to recognize two lives as necessary—the one the outer kapelistic life of drudgery, the other the inner and cherished life of the spirit. It is true that the one has a tendency to kill the other, but it must not, and you must see that it does not.

It's an awfully large order, but we really need three

lives—the life of pedagogic activity, as strenuous as you like; the social life nicely arranged, and kept in hand, but never regarded as serious; and the intellectual and spiritual life.

The pedagogic is needful for bread and butter, also for a certain form of joy; of the inner life you know what I think; the social life is required of us and must be managed. You had better act on the supposition that you are never to make your bread and butter by anything but schoolmastering. That supposition, amounting to a conviction, will keep you hard at it. Make quite sure of that department. Your inner work had better be kept as a solace.

One thing that I always felt about my own verses, if I may refer to myself, was the hope that some day my friends, including my old boys grown up to man's estate, might accept them as human pledges, and, by a certain retrospective sympathy, bear me upon their hearts. This has largely happened to me, and is now the source of my greatest happiness. When the time comes for publication—say some five years hence—nothing will have happened to your verses to make them fail of their full effect. . . . As regards publication, now or hereafter, there is but one way open—the work must be sent to a publisher, who, or his reader, will treat you with the utmost indifference, except in so far as they judge the work good. The first encounter with them is horrible: the coldest sensation, the feeling of utter friendlessness; very like what death must be, that final sensation in which we are destined to be absolutely alone. I wish I could help you more. All I can do is to



assure you that your work is most promising. But man can't live by 'sonnets' alone, and no publisher will look at you on the other side of the street till he is quite satisfied there 'is money' in you. That is their hideous phrase.

TO E. RYDINGS.

RAMSEY,

October 3, 1893.

. . . I am extremely grateful to you for your kind words about my lecture on 'Manx Character.' You do indeed give praise freely and unreservedly when you are about it. There are some people who will *hedge* under any circumstances: you are not one.

The '*inside*'<sup>1</sup> Manxman had better be told the truth about our people. It would be an insult to approach such a subject without the firmest resolve to speak the truth. And the truth I have spoken. That is one thing I can claim to have done. I am not an advocate, I am a judge: I sit on the bench. My knowledge of the case entitles me to the seat, and no one shall oust me from it.

But, after all, if the person whose character is submitted to inquiry does not exactly leave the court without the slightest stain, &c., &c., are not you surprised to see how very creditably he comes out from the examination? The analysis was a prolonged and searching one, yet he never broke down, my dear old Manxman, not he. Why, I consider the result

<sup>1</sup> I had said the 'outside Manxman' would be pleased with what had been said, but I was afraid the 'inside Manxman'—those now living on the island—might not altogether like everything therein said.—E. R.

quite a triumph. And then the desire to have it all your own way, all praise, and no blame, all sugar and butter—ah! how natural! It only makes me love them more, just as one loves a pettish and wayward child.

*The Manxman is good and sound, and a man to live with, a lovable and livable man.* That is surely the main point, and that is the upshot of the matter.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

October 9, 1893.

I was sorry to see Jowett's death in the paper. Nothing that has yet appeared does justice to the subject. That's two of my old examiners, and about the third I should not be surprised at his having gone long ago, without standing on the ceremony of 'taking his leave.' Rawlinson, I think, was his name. Timely warnings! I always owe Jowett for his kindness when he withdrew me gently, but firmly, from the grim talons of Mark.

I went up Snaefell the other day. On the top we were caught in a great hailstorm. It only lasted about ten minutes, but such a blackness! straight at a bound from Ireland—that was its track. Till then Ireland had been under the thickest veil; but the veil vanished in this deluge; and we saw the Mourne Mountains clear as crystal, but black as night. A space there was of purest sky, but no sunlight; a space of dark gunpowder tint, from which your sweet old mother looked forth the most bewitching, fascinating vixen. Oh, how she hated us! A fixed, eternal, glaring stare

of hate and implacable revenge. No, not *us*, poor little kind-hearted, goosey-gander Mona, but *you*, *you English*. How the hail-stones hissed hate! So it is that night and day these terribly 'naughty passions' pass over us in transition. We are in the line of fire, and we sometimes try to reconcile you. But what can we do? That day, for instance, we did put up the sweetest little kiss of a rainbow just over Barrule. But Ireland stared fierce and unmitigated; and your dear old bungling, well-meaning Britishers looked rather confused and flurried; but in five minutes had recovered the inevitable attitude of perfect self-complacency, and the Pharisee *in excelsis*. But sure you're a noble people, and I allis said so.

By-the-bye, notwithstanding the shelter of the hut, we got very wet, and I thought I was in for an influenza from which 'salpetre wouldn't save me, and that's a sthrong pickle.' However, I am 'just for' a sore throat, which is a sufficient nuisance, and almost confines me to the house.

I send you a copy of *N. O.*, last Saturday's. It contains an article by me on Pusey's Life, which I hope and think you will like. Before writing it, I really read the book, and steeped my mind in all the tenderest and sweetest of my old Ch. Ch. and Oriel recollections. Liddon writes like a gentleman, and has affected me much by certain suppressions which are obvious enough to the initiated. As to Pusey, I stand amazed. Church<sup>1</sup> (!) had left me unconvinced, Newman, Burgon, the Mozleys had hardly shaken me; but now before the man himself thus revealed (and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 27. His admiration for Dean Church was unqualified.

the revelation is unquestionably genuine), I throw up my hands, and fall upon my knees. Yes, here was a *good, good, real* man! And from a Patriotic point of view, what are we not to think of the patience, the firmness, the absolute confidence in his fellow-countrymen with which he waited, bestrode that fiery Pegasus, rode the great race, and won, while Newman lay sprawling on the Via Sacra? This is the unmistakable Englishman, this dogged Pusey; dogged, but did you see the tenderness! God forgive me! When I think of my blindness! Well, well, 'there's a dale that'll have to be forgiven at some of us—aye, a dale.' But, bedad, sor, I'm as thrue a Protestan' as the wan o' ye, for all that. I feel sure that no man did anything like as much as Pusey to stave off Popery in England. Don't you agree with me? What do you think of Gore and those people? Tell me. I feel a good deal attracted towards them, but don't know much about them, except that I suppose Pusey would have had nothing to say to them. But then that's of course.

The island is still as green as an emerald. Ah, that poor dear outcast in the West! If she were only as happy as we! But that look of sullen defiance! there was no mistake about it. And I have no consolation in the glibness of Chamberlain, or the bow-wow of Salisbury.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

October 12, 1893.

Your account of Jowett's funeral is most interesting.  
. . . Your brother, as usual, was on the very edge of

observation (*acies observandi*): most striking was his remark about the *fine set of heads*. . . . I believe that Jowett, like so many Englishmen, carried the principle of *not pinning his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at* so far as to forget that, besides the pecking daws, there are the craving *hearts* of others . . . craving for the food, which, God help us! is not too abundantly spread upon the tables of this world. But it is rash of me to speculate: frailties, at the worst; and the dear old elegist reminds us where these are to be left.

Do you think of going through with Lucian? Would it be advisable?—the whole of a voluminous author? . . . I must say it seems to me a kind of *slavery*: and of slavery no kind can ever repay one.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

October 15, 1893.

Fowler's<sup>1</sup> printed enclosure<sup>2</sup> is a document of great importance. I did not need it to strengthen me in my Unionism. Only no one can conceive how unhappy I feel about Ireland. No hope whatever, not in my time. It is only human nature that you steady old Unionists should feel something like exhilaration at the removal of this shadow. But to me the removal of one shadow is but the descent of another still more fatal.

In Daudet's *Lettres de mon Moulin* there is one which I have read and re-read, and would read for

<sup>1</sup> W. Warde Fowler.

<sup>2</sup> *Reasons for not conceding 'Home Rule' to Ireland.*

ever. It really is *absolute* (!). It is called 'Les Vieux'—only about half a dozen pages, imperishable, inestimable. Do read it.

Let me make a confession. This is the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity, and I have read *Ishmael*, by Miss Braddon. It is not altogether rot: but I never before realized the inequality of the authoress.

TO J. C. TARVER.

RAMSEY,

October 24, 1893.

That I don't answer your letters more promptly is a psychological study of the most interesting kind.

I sometimes think the reason may be the instantaneous repercussion of your touch—the impulse is to reply on the moment. Now, as circumstance is the beastliest of idiots, one can never be sure of doing this. Time passes, and more patient and phlegmatic desires attain their accomplishment, while the primary desire and intention vanishes futile and frustrate.

Your book on Flaubert promises to be a very exhaustive treatise. From the nature of the case, it will be very instructive for the English people. To understand Flaubert is to understand the most intensely un-English spirit that ever breathed. That will do us good; we sadly want our loins to be girded, and, for the matter of that, our lamps to be set burning. The excessive scrupulousness of Flaubert in his literary work is not likely to have any imitators this side of the Channel. But it is well we should know, if only in distant inaccessibility, these children

of light. I have read *Le Docteur Rameau* of Ohnet ;— first part good, beginning of second part (some three chapters) intolerable rot ; the remainder, except just one slip at the very end, magnificent.

But I never tire of Daudet's *Lettres de mon Moulin*. You know the short story called 'Les Vieux.' Ah, that is exactly what I would fain write ! Such a merest trifle, but such ineffable loveliness. Doubtless you have read it : you will at once recollect it, when I quote the phrase, 'Bon jour braves gens ! je suis l'ami de Maurice.' The quality ! the quality ! Oh, do let us aim at that ; it is everything. And to think that it should seem so casual, just a drop amongst a thousand others, when it is really the *gutta serena* of a priceless pearl that doesn't drop at all. These things delight me, but they also depress me. They don't perplex me at all. I quite see how natural it is for certain minds to energize in this way : but then *I* can't ; and that is settled for ever, and probably was settled some fifty years ago. In your case, it is not settled. Strive, strive to enter in at the strait gate ! Even *I* (madman that I am !) have not yet given up all endeavour, utterly as I have abandoned hope. The endeavour is to write one poor story of about five, not more than ten pages, that the world will not willingly let die. What say you ? Shall we go in for this ? Shall we get the little bit of canvas, and stretch it on an easel that shall be slender as *les fils de la bonne Vierge*, but strong as adamant ?

Dear Tarver, a visit to you would be exquisite ; but it cannot be as yet. Let us hope, 'before I go



hence,' I may manage it. At present, correspondence (not, I trust, with the reciprocity on the one side only) must do the business. Our brave little Isle has behaved admirably all the summer; and it still looks very pleasant and green. I have drunk largely of its essence, and am all the better.

TO J. C. TARVER.

RAMSEY,

October 29, 1893.

Many thanks for the loan of Maupassant.

I have read one volume—the *Contes du jour et de la nuit*. I confess I am a good deal disappointed. The *Aveu* is fair, but not much beyond the kind of story which commercial travellers used to tell in the good old times. Whether this simple straightforward kind of lubricity is still the thing around the supper-table and in the smoking-room, I can't say. They are gone from my gaze, those *neiges d'antan*. The story, however, is 'Le Bonheur.' I don't deny the gruesome merits of *Le Vieux* (really admirable); but, you know, a little bit of sugar suits English. Maupassant is far from saccharine, deals as little as possible in the article. But the old craving is in us, and the absinthe will hardly go down without it. Independently of that, one likes to know that in entering the inferno of this great cynic one is not bidden to 'abandon all hope.' Why, here is a lovely story, and a manly. No, no, these men have not scooped out their hearts and made metal cups of them. The old alternate stroke is there, the see-saw

of what men really are and must be, up to the heaven of purity and peace, down to the *sentina* of honest nastiness. Aren't we made so? He that denies either *Schwung* is a monster and no man. This little sketch is so exquisite too as a matter of art. Corsica, as seen occasionally from some point of view on the Rivier, suggests the situation. How different the Corsica at the beginning, a shadow, a wraith, and at the end, the home of these poor old things! By Jove, I felt this very much. I always feel like this in looking at hills far away, especially when they are separated from me like those of Cumberland and Scotland by the sea, and are only visible at rare intervals.

All my children are forsaking me: I intend myself going to Castletown and spending a week with my old chum Pleignier. I doubt not we shall have plenty of Flaubert, Maupassant, &c., and, if we don't burn the midnight oil, imbibe a good deal of the midnight *whusk*.

TO MISS D. BROWN.

RAMSEY,

November 2, 1893.

I was afraid the passage would be stormy, although the wind was rather favourable. You had it, I think, technically speaking, on the starboard quarter, and she probably both kicked and rolled a good deal. . . . I saw your boat for a good while; I went up Douglas Head, and walked along the Marine Drive, and so on to Kerristhal, near Port Soderick, beyond the

completed portion. It is really very fine. Then I turned inland and wandered past Summercot, Oakhill, Middle, Pulrose to Braddan—a regular Braddan ‘sthroul,’ terminating at the Union Mills station. It was a soothing walk, but rather melancholy. I found myself beset with the thought how the tradition of all this must cease with me personally. None of you can retain it, and, of my contemporaries, hardly any one has the clue. That made me—well, I think I may say, a little sad.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*November 5, 1893.*

I went to Douglas on Friday week and saw Dora off by the boat. So I went to the Head, the Marine Drive. Really very fine, though I was shocked to see, on a great advertizing board, that Bishop Bardsley had described the Great Orme’s Head as not being *in it* with the Manx marvel. Not in it! What a phrase to fall from the lips of a bishop! As I advanced on my walk I had other things to think of. It is my old parish; every knoll and nook haunted by a thousand memories. And indeed I felt rather sad. The thought that troubled me was this—who is to perpetuate the traditions? They must go with me. The whole business will be a perfect blank; not only tribal traditions, but family. My children know next to nothing of them. And these traditions are the most precious deposit, though not of a nature to be made public. ‘The wind passeth over it, and

it is gone; and the place thereof knoweth it no more.'

Under this burden I stumbled on. The new generation must build the fabric of its own interests, and the old must vanish. Yet there are families in which, by some strong vital force of projection on the one hand and a retrospective adhesiveness on the other, all that is best and worthiest is transmitted. It was never so with us. We live vigorously in the living present, and extract the gold from the current years, being amply satisfied with contemporary relations. I alone have tried to build a cairn of memories in my books. But that is nothing. This *isolation* is the nightmare that oppresses me. If, in another world, I could find my brothers, restored and fitted for the converse, what a joy it would be! Perhaps it will be so. This is a long monody. Do forgive me!

Tarver writes 'constant.' He sent me last week two books of Maupassant—short stories, rather disappointing, but some of them excessively clever, one beautiful. Maupassant did not attach much importance to beauty; but, in spite of himself, she sometimes hung upon his neck.

A very kind letter from Ainger. But how funny it is that so many people are surprised that I can write decent English verse! They had focussed me as a dialectic poet, a man of the people, imperfectly educated, and so forth; and they seem rather impatient at my venturing in a new and more cultivated field. What ought I to do? Shall I put on my next title-page—'Late Fellow of Oriel,' &c.? or am I always to abide under this ironic cloak of rusticity?

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

November 7, 1893.

Here is a pretty enough *testimonium*. It occurs in a hymn which, down to the fifteenth century, is said to have been sung at Mantua in the Mass of St. Paul:—

Ad Maronis mausoleum  
Ductus fudit super eum  
Piae rorem lacrimae :  
Quantum, inquit, te fecissem,  
Vivum si te invenissem,  
Poetarum maxime !

Daniel gives this in his *Thesaurus Hymnologicus*, 574. Don't you think it a delightful instance of the Renaissance *naïveté*? I will attempt a translation:—

Brought to Maro's tomb, he cried,  
O'er the flower of Mantua's pride  
Shedding many a pious tear:  
'Living if I could have found thee,  
How I would have loved and crowned thee,  
Chief of poets, ever dear!'

Milton's marvellous *blend* will no doubt be present to your mind. Also Walter Map:—

Meum est propositum in taberna mori,  
Et vinum appositum sitienti ori,  
Ut dicant, quum venerint angelorum chori,  
'Deus sit propitius isti potatori.'

'Tis my firm resolve to die  
In a tavern lying,  
Wine unto my thirsty lips  
Kindest hands supplying.  
So shall angels come to me,  
Bands of angels, sighing :  
'God have mercy on his soul!  
'Tis the drunkard dying.'

But this is not the same attitude of mind. There is a suspicion of the rowdy, as in Villon. Whereas these blessed old clergymen at Mantua sang their ditty in the most perfect good faith.

Do you know Robert Bridges' poems at all? I have never seen them, but there are some extracts, I think, in *Temple Bar* for Oct. Very fine, I think. Funnily enough, the *Temple Bar* reviewer urges him to translate Sophocles! but is there never to be an end of this translation mania? What do you think of Jowett's *Plato*? I often see it described as a masterpiece. Is it? Plato's style is so all-important that I cannot but 'hae me doots.' Again, I am at Dante for the whatth (!) time. Few joys are to be compared with this. The calm is so soothing, resting on such enormous strength. The felicities can only be adequately appreciated by an Italian, but they often *pierce* with a perfectly awful splendour. I think Dante is monotonous, but what a monotone! He drowns you in a dream, and you never want to wake. This is sheer selfishness and egotism, mooning on about my reading and so forth. I don't feel to be talking to you. Stop me when I take this line.

And commend me to Clifton friends. Whom do you see most of? R. I hope remembers me. He is a pure righteous soul with the root of the matter in him. . . . I shall gossip for ever. *Tuus admodum.*

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

November 11, 1893.

I went to Peel on Thursday, and greatly, vastly dined. We had a very pleasant company, no speeches, just one or two songs.

I probably smoked half a dozen cigars, and as many pipes. *Deus sit propitius!* These Peel men are most interesting: they were the upper class, not 'Tommy the Mate' & Co. I saw Tommy, though, next morning. He recited to me some of his verses. The nice old creature! but really egotistic in a degree which—— Well, they don't get much from us, and the kindly listener is to them at once a solace and a temptation.

Rowley's interpretation of my 'Rapture'<sup>1</sup> had already occurred to me, and I now begin to prefer it. The Mourne Mountains and what lies behind them—obvious! The longing look, the *quousque tandem*, the 'come over into Macedonia and help us.' So let hate betake herself to her native hell, and let us bridge the Channel with a bridge of sighs! God bless old Ireland! When could we go over there together? It would be so refreshing. I have a lot of pent-up love in me: let me go and pour it forth where perhaps it would not be unwelcome.

Dante is still my companion. Some things bore me, astronomical horrors, indications of time, Ptolemaic complications. I wish he had left those dismalities to 'Chaos and old Night.' Yet one is uncomfortable at passing them over. You remember M.'s disgust at

<sup>1</sup> Cf. letter of October 9, 1893.



being hurried over *loci desperati* in our Italian readings. I have not yet attained to the true nervous tension which makes some men to 'jump' the bothers and land in Elysium. Now, sir, I talk of Tommy the Mate's egotism! how about mine? This life is a producer and conserver of egotism. Hang it all! if schoolmastering is but a sorry business, at any rate it mixes you up with contemporaries and compels you to take account of them.

TO H. G. DAKYNS.

RAMSEY,

November 13, 1893.

I have been reading your second volume<sup>1</sup> with great delight. . . . Don't you think the *Polity of the Athenians* is meant as a satire? It reads exactly like one, witty and almost bitter. All these lesser works are wondrous interesting. Even the *Ways and Means* carries me with it as on a flowing tide of energy. You have excited my appetite for what is yet to come. Some of the very best wine is yet unbroached. . . .

Music deigns to visit these island spaces: I don't mean merely Nature's music, though of this we have good store [listen! the moan, the sob, the vagitus!]; but our Manx people are musical. They have fine voices, and they sing in tune. This latter quality of theirs is almost as infallible as are their *aitches*; for which let us be duly thankful. We had a capital concert some weeks ago, to which I contributed a reading of 'Peggy's Wedding.'

<sup>1</sup> Translation of Xenophon.

M. wrote me nearly a year ago a long letter, a sort of *Confessio Fidei* combined with an invitation, challenge, or what not. *I never answered it!* Men who go in for 'new religions' must not apply to me. I do not mean to say that 'the old is better,' but I am content to drink the blessed old vintage as long as I am *di qua*. When I 'drink it new in my Father's kingdom,' these bothers will be of the past.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

November 14, 1893.

I wrote you a rigmarole the other day about the *naïveté* of the Renaissance exhibited in a mediaeval hymn. Of course it was Virgil. It was quite natural that Paul should be conceived of as shedding the 'pious tear' over Virgil.

I have been reading Dakyns' second volume, and am delighted with it. I really don't know which to admire most—the architect, artist, or man. But the notes I think are the best. How deliciously he does ramble! No, it is not rambling either. It is the gesture of some lovely butterfly that lights upon or hovers above a flower. With what dexterity he taps the text, with the application of what consummate instruments! Other critics can probe or dissect; but who like Dakyns can maintain with such exquisite libration the asymptotic attitude which is so charming, and, let me add, so characteristic? The translation reads well. I have not the original to compare. In

the *Agésilas* he attains his apogee: in Dakyns' English it is magnificent. The peroration is quite masterly.

Altogether it is most refreshing to find that our old friend has by no means lost himself in those latitudes.

Let me remind you that I am not above receiving with pleasure a bit of Clifton gossip. I observe that you sedulously (?) exclude that form of interest. But, happy though I may be in my island life, I can't forget how long I went in and out among you at Clifton; and where I conversed for so many years there must needs be interests that touch me nearly. They cannot but come closer both to you and me, certainly to you, than the affairs of Manxland.

So let me have, for instance, a report (from your point of view) of a masters' meeting. Tell me how people looked, as well as what they said, or if they said nothing. Let the canvas glow! Certainly I would have decorum: this is, of course, the subaudition; and this I know you will faithfully reproduce. But supposing in that serene, slightly colourless atmosphere, some one has made an ass of himself, why not give me the benefit of an *appone lucro*? *Here* people make asses of themselves every day; but *there*, in proportion to the infrequency is the piquancy of the emergence. Then the 'Merry Wives of Clifton.' Ah, my dear sir, you say you don't know them. Get out! you ought to know them: 'tis a field like another, and indeed a fertile one—a field, did I say? a parterre, a pleasaunce! Don't tell me, sir! Take counsel, and let me be admitted to the feast private and particular.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

November 17, 1893.

The admirable <sup>1</sup> Fowler has sent me a volume of Bridges' *Poems*. Wasn't it kind of him? Many of them are very beautiful. The gem is 'The Windmill.' Let me copy it for you; indeed, I straightway got it off by heart: so here it is.

The green corn waving in the dale,  
The ripe grass waving on the hill:  
I lean across the paddock pale  
And gaze upon the giddy mill.

Its hurtling sails a mighty sweep  
Cut thro' the air: with rushing sound  
Each strikes in fury down the steep,  
Rattles, and whirls in chase around.

Beside his sacks the miller stands  
On high within the open door:  
A book and pencil in his hands,  
His grist and meal he reckoneth o'er.

*Delicious!* { His tireless merry slave the wind  
Is busy with his work to-day:  
From whencesoe'er he comes to grind;  
He hath a will and knows the way.

He gives the creaking sails a spin,  
The circling millstones faster flee,  
The shuddering timbers groan within,  
And down the shoots the meal runs free.

*Glorious!* { The miller giveth him no thanks,  
And doth not much his work o'erlook:  
He stands beside the sacks, and ranks  
The figures in his dusty book.

There! that is worthy of Heine, and wonderfully like him.

<sup>1</sup> W. Warde Fowler.

I have written a pendant for the Virgilio-Pauline whimsy. This is it:

We are led to Maro's bust,  
 And we slake the sacred dust,  
     Not with pious tears like Paul.  
 Reason pregnant is for weeping,  
 Where Virgilius lies a-sleeping,  
     And we hear the urgent call—  
 'Construe! Construe!' Head of Priscian  
 Broken oft, Apollo Lycian,  
     God that wield'st the silver bow,  
 Help us, one faint glimmer send us,  
 Muses nine, assist, befriend us,  
     Oh! Pierian virgins, oh!  
 For the master's look is horrid,  
 And his corrugated forehead  
     Indicates the usual signs.  
 We are done, sirs, we are spun, sirs—  
 All is black beneath the sun, sirs—  
     'Every one five hundred lines'!

Many, many thanks for the good baccy. Birkett and I have both 'sampled' it.

I have just read your 'Don Quixote' in the *Monthly Packet* for May. I remember it well. It is delightful as ever.

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

November 28, 1893.

. . . <sup>1</sup> We sat down in some cottages. Some of the people were magnificent, throwing themselves upon you with such vigour of accent, such warmth and fun, and endless receptivity, bright, well pulled together, sonorous, that I nearly staggered under it—not chaff—

<sup>1</sup> Walking back from Castletown, where he had been staying.

good heavens! no—but would have been chaff, only it wasn't, for they can't chaff.

Kitty Kermode, *alias* Kinvig, was the best. She said a very sweet and profound thing (but I can't phrase it as I ought) about the value of friendship, as compared with that of love. A little happy creature of some seventeen giggled in a dark corner, but I let her giggle; the old woman pierced me through and through. *O fortunati*—O indeed! And these dear things seemed to know that their lot was a happy one. *Quod faustum!* Unutterably precious to me is the woman, the native of the hills, almost my own age, or a little younger, whose spirit is set upon the finest springs, and her sympathies have an almost masculine depth, and a length of reflection that wins your confidence and stays your sinking heart.

The lady can't do it. This class, of what I suppose you would call peasant women (I won't have the word), seems made for the purpose of rectifying everything, and redressing the balance, inspiring us with that awe which the immediate presence of absolute womanhood creates in us. The plain, practical woman, with the outspoken throat and the eternal eyes. Oh, mince me, madam, mince me your pretty mincings! Deliberate your dainty reticences! Balbutient loveliness, avaunt! Here is a woman that talks like a bugle, and, in everything, sees God.

My eye! there's a buster. *Da veniam!* it is really too dreadful. I hope you are well. Kindest remembrances.

I AM ALONE!

TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

December 3, 1893.

Y. upon Herrick! What do you mean? By Jove, we don't know. Does he appreciate the unbowlerized Herrick? Herrick of the amatory poems, as well as the divine and moral. Did he ever see 'a tempest in a petticoat'? He may after all leave 'merry gestes' behind him. See that you become one of his literary executors! Y. as a denizen of Cythera is lovely.

I am not doing much now; in fact, am very idle. I have been reading too many novels, specially French. This is no good. Pleignier supplies me; so does Tarver. The whole 'bilin' might as well be put in the fire. It is dreadful to get reading these things immediately after breakfast, with the first pipe. Of course I ought to be out in this glorious keen air, but, instead of that, I loiter over these 'divilments,' one after another. I get into an armchair by a good fire. A look at yesterday's *Standard*; and then—

Take a novel, blend of Ouida:

Metaphors are mixed and sappy—

Ardent creatures! how they need a

Kindly priest to make them happy!

But I am not sympathetic,

Spite of all the cash and jewels,

And I find my gorge emetic

Rising at the hero's duels.



Take another : matrimony  
Posited, a sober joyaunce  
Waits the reader ? no, my sonny :  
To my very great annoyance,  
Hymen opes the golden barriers ;  
'Tis a race, let him or her win ;  
I will join the peaceful harriers,  
Write to Dakyns, write to Irwin.

Richepin, Maupassant, great Zola,  
Pornographic authors recent,  
*Solus* picturing *cum sola*,  
Just a trifle less than decent.  
Wessex Hardy swears the Channel  
Shall not baulk his bold beginning,  
Drops his homely British flannel,  
Sets his pretty Tess a-sinning ;

Is not frankly, gaily lubrick—  
Mrs. Grundy will not bear it—  
So he ducks, her formal rubrick  
Cheating with a timely *caret*.  
English, German, French, Italian—  
Not the stuff for me, i' faikins !  
I will ramble on Slieu Whallian,  
Write to Irwin, write to Dakyns.

And so I have had a very blessed ramble on Slieu Whallian, 'the mountain of the wild colts,' which looks down upon our Tynwald Hill. Soothing, reintegrating, restoring the moral balance, making me young and lusty as an eagle. 'Lustful as a

satyr' would better represent the school of writers with whom I have been conversing. Severe, perhaps, upon Hardy; but, unless we accept the theory of weakness and physical indisposition, I can only account for the latter part of *Tess* as a deliberate imitation of the cruelty and defiance of the common sentiment which I find so rampant in Maupassant. It is true the satire of this tremendous person is terrific, but so cold-blooded. By-the-bye, can satire be cold-blooded? That is more like irony. Yes, he uses irony, but for the purposes of satire. Juvenal never cools down to this point of venomous, deadly sting, this cobra of horror. He gives vent to his *sæva indignatio*. Not so Maupassant: he never turns a hair, and on you go!

I think his *Bel Ami* one of the most brilliant and annihilating works. A very devil! But, somewhere behind, there is a God, a God that hisses at his own creation, and spits upon the hurly-burly that has escaped from his hands.

To lay this aside for a while, let us talk, not of Slieu Whallian, antidotic though it be, yet not *in pari materia*. Let me tell you how delighted I was the other day, when an old pupil of mine sent me a piece of music he had written to the words—'Thou art gone to the grave, but we will not deplore thee.' I refer to the words, rather than to the music, though that is extremely good.

But have you ever quite realized the force of Heber? Except for the unfortunate choice of a metre, I think those lines are almost perfect. They show what that old Evangelical school could do, when

chastened by absolute culture, and guarded by consummate taste. Religious poetry lies open to so many dangers. *Hymns Ancient and Modern* show the ghastly results only too manifest.

But I find something 'similar the same' in the *Christian Year*. Not so much, though, a lack of taste as of elevation. What a glorious creature was that Reginald! You don't know how I love him. Try that poem by any test or standard, and I think you will find it faultless. Yet the emotion and the piety, so often the pitfalls of elegance, have not availed here to mar a single movement. *Teres atque rotundus*, it stands a Koh-i-noor of sacred song.

And thank God for it! Why should this dear fellow's anxiety, quite honest anxiety, for the souls of men, thwart the native bent of beauty that gave the buoyant lilt, and produced the inevitable phrase? I confess I could, in this poem, spare the buoyancy; it might have been utilized in another 'From Greenland's icy mountains.'

But even in that old enemy of mine, who does not recognize the artist? 'Waft, waft, ye winds, His story'—no—then I give it up. A true child of genius, for all that. He did not live to be a Charles Wesley, nor could he perhaps ever have become that. One Charles Wesley, sir, and no other.

PS.—Enclosed you will find a curious address upon an envelope:

'Scholar and Historian.'

Large, is it not!

## TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*December 25, 1893.*

Irwin, whenas the suns, an arrant crew  
Of lubbers, cleave the unwilling fissile dark  
(But doubtless better hid in Noah's ark),  
I think that I will take a shot at you.  
Not present is the slightest glimpse of blue,  
And yet withouten care, withouten cark,  
I rise as lissome as a summer's lark,  
And do what I suppose all people do.  
I greet the friend whom chiefest I must love,  
And unto every Irwin in the land  
Peace, plenty, and prosperity I pray.  
So shall the merry gods that reign above  
Have richest offerings at my grateful hand,  
And thine own whisky crown the cheerful day<sup>1</sup>.

## TO S. T. IRWIN.

RAMSEY,

*December 27, 1893.*

Such a combination of virtues I never expect to see again in any man as God gave us in Bartholomew<sup>2</sup>. There was a divine sweetness in his constancy and patience, and the 'humility,' which I see you recognize as an element in his character, was extremely beautiful and touching.

<sup>1</sup> A Christmas offering.

<sup>2</sup> F. M. Bartholomew, for many years a master at Clifton, died of cholera while on a visit to India, in December, 1892. It would be impossible to say here what his personality was to Clifton.

It is an experience that seldom falls to one's lot, to follow slowly but surely through noble avenues of reserve, a soul that withdraws itself as you advance towards the hidden treasures it guarded with such profound modesty.

Simple and sage—simplicity, I imagine, the grand note, simplicity of motive rather than of action, a very deep and rare simplicity. His loss is beyond all losses that I can conceive. Clifton was twined around his very heart: his life was Clifton.

Beside his perfect devotion the ordinary standard of zeal and industry, however honest, is merely respectable; with some it is only a make-believe of awkward gesticulation.

I append a sonnet, which, to some extent, relieves my sorrow, and which may perhaps help to relieve yours.

#### IN MEMORIAM.

F. M. BARTHOLOMEW.

Unselfish, steadfast, absolutely true,  
Dear friend, sage counsellor, your every thought  
Was ours, as pious Nature inward wrought  
The civic purpose and the loftier view.  
From him you most revered the golden dew  
Of loyalty traditional was caught,  
Whose gold is steel; and so you constant taught  
This earthly Clifton, loved Bartholomew.  
Bides yet a Clifton in the chiefest Heaven,  
The *avro*-Clifton God has made for us,  
Serenely placed, divinely bright and fair.  
Sometimes unto our noblest hearts 'tis given

To see its circuit broad and luminous:  
He saw it, and he found it, and he's there.

RAMSEY,

*December 26, 1893.*

TO MRS. SHENSTONE.

RAMSEY,

*December 30, 1893.*

Mr. Shenstone wrote to me about our poor dear old Bartle. What a sad story! we are not likely to see such another. He was goodness itself; and we shall miss him as a friend, as a counsellor, as a true and loyal companion more than can be expressed. Let us be thankful for so great a blessing. I remember his first arrival amongst us as if it had been yesterday. He was then fresh from Marlborough and Oxford; young and sanguine. The experience of life never clouded him, though it made him grave and thoughtful. The inner man was 'renewed day by day,' and a ripe sweetness assured us thereof. Ah, well! . . .

I shall make inquiries about farm-houses near the coast. We are a funny little people, light-hearted, irresponsible, somewhat unpractical, very un-English, if that will suit you. For my part, I almost forget that I ever lived in England. No doubt I do my level best to humour this tendency, and to make a Lethe of the blessed old herring-pond. And Lethe is kind, and Lethe is useful; but there is no Lethe in my heart for dear old friends. So come and see! Kindest wishes for the New Year.







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